

**PIRATES, PIRATES, PIRATES**

## **OTHER TRIPLE TITLES**

**Dogs, Dogs, Dogs**

**Elephants, Elephants, Elephants**

**Ghosts, Ghosts, Ghosts**

**Horses, Horses, Horses**

**Indians, Indians, Indians**

**Jokes, Jokes, Jokes**

**Cowboys, Cowboys, Cowboys**

**Speed, Speed, Speed**

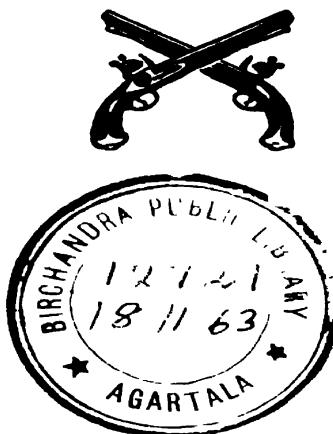
# Pirates Pirates, Piråtes

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*Stories of*  
Cutlasses and Corsairs  
Buried Treasure and Buccaneers  
Ships and Swashbucklers

*selected by*  
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*illustrated by*  
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**To the memory of  
H. R. M. CLEE  
whose great spirit of adventure  
inspired this book**

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## Fifteen men on the dead man's chest Ho-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum.

HAVE you ever wanted to be a pirate? Well, you won't be the first person who has. The pirate's life sounds pretty exciting. Sailing the seven seas. Capturing galleons full of gems and bars of silver, even beautiful ladies. Rings in your ears. Red kerchief tied over your head. A bristling mustache. Perhaps a patch over your eye, and a cutlass in your hand. . . .

There were many kinds of pirates and they traveled under many different names: freebooters, buccaneers, corsairs, sea wolves, sea rovers, marauders of the sea. Even a privateer was a pirate of sorts. "Scratch a privateersman and you'll find a pirate" was a saying. Of course, a privateer wasn't cruel and bloody, like a regular pirate, but he did capture vessels for their cargo—for his government, of course. There are even pirates today. The river pirates and pirates in Bering Strait are pretty tough fellows. And people today are still hunting pirate treasure.

There are as many different kinds of pirate stories as there are pirates. You will find in this book stories of mutinies, of search for buried pirate treasure, of fights between pirates themselves, of privateers who helped this country win a war. You will find stories of some famous pirates: Jean Lafitte, Blackbeard, Bonnet, and others.

Yes, these pirates were very colorful fellows. But strictly between ourselves, I'd rather *read* about them than *meet* one.



# Two Chests of Treasure

By MERRITT P. ALLEN

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TWILIGHT WAS on the Caribbean and so magically did it blend all things it touched that no one could mark the spot where sea and sky met. Sky and sea—they seemed to comprise the whole world except one tiny speck of land that lay like a grain of sand on the rounded face of the ocean. There was no life on the island above that of insects unless a migrating bird chanced to rest there for an hour or a turtle crawled up the rocks to bask in the sand. To find a man in such a place would have been startling, but to find a boy there, alone, was nigh amazing. Yet a boy was sleeping on the sand; a lad perhaps sixteen years old was curled up in the shadow of the rocks.

He slept as the evening deepened, then at a sound he sat up suddenly, as one does who has been on the alert for days and nights together. He had a harried look, his blue eyes were weary, his hair, worn in a short queue, was unkempt and his linen shirt, velvet breeches, silk hose and silver-buckled shoes were stained with salt water and wrinkled.

Again came the sound, the crackling of a sail in the wind. He leaped to his feet and ran to the edge of the



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rocks. Yes, there was a ship, an English ship by the build of her, standing off the island in the gloom. A weakness seized the boy so that before he could hail the stranger he must lean against the rocks, giddy with joy. And then, as he filled his lungs to shout, he suddenly caught his breath and remained silent.

What he saw was a small boat on the beach and at the moment two negroes were coming ashore from it, each carrying a heavy chest on his shoulder and a spade in his hand. Behind them walked a man bearing a ship's lantern, whose light played on the brass bindings of the chests. A pirate captain come to bury his treasure! Even in that day, it was the year 1680, such a sight was enough to strike any boy dumb.

The three men came up the slope silently and pitched over into the little valley in the center of the island.

"Here!" The captain indicated a spot on the sand. "Sink a hole half a fathom and be quick, ye black heathen."

The slaves put down the chests and fell to work with their spades in the manner of men who fear their master with good cause. The captain set his lantern on the ground and by its light the boy saw that he was short and powerfully built, with the dress of a sailor save for a plumed hat such as cavaliers wore. His face was shaded by the wide brim of this hat but doubtless it matched his character. He stepped back, his feet wide apart as though standing on a deck, and when he folded his arms across his chest there was a pistol in each hand. The boy watched, spellbound, forgetful of all else, for this was no sailor's yarn such as he had heard on the docks at home, but a living reality.

"Lay off!" the captain snapped.



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The negroes dropped their spades.

“Heave ‘em in.”

They placed the chests in the hole.

“Bury ‘em.”

The negroes resumed their spades and the lantern-light flickered on their naked, sweating backs. The captain watched them silently as the sand filled the hole, making a swishing, ghostly sound. In the shadow of the rocks the boy’s brain had run ahead of his eyes and was rapidly seeking the best way to discover himself to the captain. He must make himself known, for this chance ship was his heaven-sent means of escape, but to reveal himself as a witness of the planting of the treasure would be to run after death. Better to wait until the men were re-embarking, then shout as though just sighting them. After that, events must guide him as they appeared. He had already passed through enough to have faith in the future. To be sure, he had never before met pirates on the open sea, though he had seen plenty of them in Port Royal, but such fellows were human, with instincts and sympathies common to other men.

This comforting thought was shattered in a moment. The hole was full and as the slaves stooped to smooth the sand above it the captain stepped close behind them, his arms unfolded, and fire leaped simultaneously from his hands. The negroes sank upon the sand and, pocketing his pistols and picking up the lantern, their master left them where they fell. They would tell no tales.

Shivering with horror, the boy watched the captain climb the slope. On the crest, he stopped in his tracks, a volley of curses rolled from his lips, and he swung the lan-



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tern around his head with the frenzy of a maniac. Looking past him the boy saw the cause—the ship that had been standing by was now bearing away to sea under full sail in a good breeze, abandoning him! The captain dropped his lantern and went in great leaps toward the beach and there he halted, for the small boat was gone.

“Ahoy, sir!” the boy shouted. There was now a bond between himself and the man that made him throw away discretion.

“Who’s that?” The captain wheeled and drew his pistols, searching for the source of the voice..

“Don’t shoot. I’m a castaway like yourself. I have a boat. Shall we follow them?”

“A boat?”

“A small open craft with a sail.”

“A fine match for my ship! The scoundrels have foxxed me, but I ain’t struck my flag yet. Who are ye, lad?” he asked, walking slowly back from the water.

The boy picked up the lighted lantern and went to meet him, boldly. “I’m Roger Wilkes from Port Royal,” he said.

“What ye doing on this beast’s thumb o’ rock?”

“Shipwrecked and drifting eight days in a boat. I landed here at midday to feel the earth again.”

“Alone?”

“Yes, sir. When our ship foundered we were making ready the boats, but we were too late and all went down with her. When I came up I saw a boat floating and climbed into it, but I never sighted one of our crew.”

“Your boat was provisioned?”

“Partly. There is still some water and boucan left. And the mate had put his navigating instruments aboard. I don’t know how to use them, but mayhap you do.”



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"Aye, I'm a navigator." The captain's small eyes glinted uneasily in the lantern light. "Show me the craft."

"She lies the other side of the island," Roger said and led the way.

The captain inspected the little boat with a glance that saw everything.

"Seaworthy if handled right," he muttered. "These instruments are good. I could circle the world with 'em."

"Then we can get away from here," Roger cried. "It is providential for both of us."

"This all the water aboard?" The captain kicked a cask.

"Yes. And there is not a drop on the island. Are we far from fresh water?"

"No," he said, for he knew it was hundreds of leagues.

"Let's start now. This is a—a horrible place."

"Easy, lad. We'll give the ship leeway. If they sighted us at daylight they'd send us to the bottom to be rid o' me."

"They mutinied against you, sir?"

"The jellyfish lack the sand to mutiny." The captain sat down on the cask and removed his hat, revealing an egg-shaped skull set on a thick, brutish neck. "I reckon ye see'd what happened here tonight," he added.

"I did," Roger answered evenly. "But circumstances have made us shipmates and closed my mouth."

"Spoke like a gentleman! I reckon ye *be* a gentleman," the captain said. He was becoming more friendly all the while and his tone was now that of a fisherman who wanted to swap yarns for an idle hour. And Roger, who had been alone on the ocean staring death in the eye for days, found relief in talking.

"My father was captain of a ship running between Port



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Royal and London," he explained, answering the hint in the other's words. "She was a mail ship, the *Rose of Jamaica*."

"That was her as went down with ye aboard?" The captain replaced his hat so that its shadow masked his face.

"Oh, no. I was on another one bound to trade with the Dutch at Darien. My father's ship has been missing a year past."

"Missing, ye say?"

"Strangely missing. She was a stout craft with a full crew, there were no great storms at the time and no hostilities that we know of."

"Queer things happen at sea, lad."

"But I'll not believe what some say happened," Roger cried passionately.

"To the *Rose of Jamaica*?" The captain waited expectantly.

"Yes, sir. You see, she carried secret messages from the governor of Jamaica to the King as about the Spaniards in Hispaniola. It's being whispered that she went over to the Dons and sold the papers for gold."

"They accuse your father of treason, eh?"

"No! Not him nor his officers. But they say the crew was bought in port and mutinied on the sea. It's a disgrace to a captain to be unable to handle his crew. My father's name is not as fair as it was. You know what rumor will do. I would give my life to clear my father's reputation."

The captain's teeth flashed in the starlight as he bit off a quid of tobacco. "So it's a disgrace, eh, to let the crew get the upper hand?"

Roger went cold at his own clumsy wit, but he would not retreat. "I've said it and I'll not deny it," he answered.



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“Yours is a bold tongue, cockerel, and a bold heart, too. For that I’ll tell ye something. Shamed I may be for being left here like a puppy, but the jest is on the crew. For weeks past they’ve been a-muttering and I know’d they was smelling the treasure in my cabin. My own treasure it was, too, my fair share of the purchases we’d made.”

“And they wanted it?”

“Aye. They’d wasted their own and hankered for mine. So I hid it under my cabin floor, square in front o’ the door where they don’t expect it to be. I was a ship’s carpenter once and I did the job myself. Then I filled them two chests with sand from the ballast and come ashore here to bury my treasure. ’Twas necessary to finish the blacks to put the stamp o’ reality on the business. Aye, lad, them chests yonder is full o’ sand from the beach o’ Tortuga.” He threw back his head and laughed.

“But you have lost your treasure,” Roger pointed out.

“I’ll find it again. I’ll find my ship, for I know this old Spanish Main as a merchant knows his pocket.”

“You’ve no doubt we can escape from a place like this?”

“Didn’t I say I could sail this craft round the world?”

“Then let’s be going. The wind is favorable. Your ship will be far out of sight by morning and we’ll be safe from it.”

For a full minute the captain gazed at the stars, which blazed like diamonds on a velvet cloak. Then, “We’ll waste no more time,” he said. “Is all aboard?”

“Everything,” Roger answered eagerly. And well he might be excited as well as devoutly thankful to be thus provided with a skilled navigator when all had seemed lost.

By the light of the lantern the captain examined the oars, the sail, everything.



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“She floats here?”

“Yes, sir. She’s moored to that rock.”

“Cast off and shove her out. I’ll steer with an oar past the point.”

Roger waded in, pushing the boat, until the water lapped his armpits, then he started to climb aboard.

“Stand off!” The captain’s voice cut like a knife.

The boy looked past the lantern, which was on a boat seat, and saw a pistol pointed at his head.

“What are you doing?” His voice was high-pitched with fear and he sank back in the water.

“It’s me or you,” the captain said, unmoved, “and having the upper hand, it’s me that gets away.”

“You’re going to leave me here!”

“Aye. There’s water enough for only one. I’ll leave ye here, or shoot ye where ye stand. ’Twill help none to whimper.”

“I’m not whimpering!” The boy’s eyes blazed as he looked over the gunwale. “I’ll not whimper for a coward like you.”

“Lad,” the captain said in a voice that was a bit less hard, “I’ve fancied the spirit o’ ye from the start. I’d take ye if I could, but ’twould be death for the both o’ us.”

“I gave you all I had. I trusted you—you pirate!”

“I don’t deny it, but I’m a man as wants to live. Ye may be took off.”

“You know a ship never comes near this island. I’ll die of thirst.”

“Likely enough. But I’ll give ye a crumb o’ comfort. ’Twas I as sunk the *Rose of Jamaica*.”

“You murdered my father!”

“He died fighting like a man.”





*“Having the upper hand, it’s me that get’s away,”  
the captain said*



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"Thank you for that—if it is true."

"'Tis true. We needed supplies, so when we sighted a ship we run up distress signals and when she hove to we boarded her."

"You brute! And now you taunt me with it."

"Listen, lad. I took the captain's papers, for they might be handy in a pinch. Many a time I've saved my skin by knowing what was in a ship's papers. Among these was the secret dispatches ye spoke of. They meant nothing to me but I kept 'em, for it's things like that as saves a man's neck, sqmetimes. They're in my cabin now and when I regain my ship—and I *will* regain her!—I'll send them papers to the governor o' Jamaica with a word that'll take the blot from yer father's name. That'll be the price o' this boat I'm taking from ye. Now, will ye take a bullet or will ye go ashore?"

Roger went ashore, for human nature fights for life to the last. Slowly the captain rowed away from land, then raised the sail and disappeared in the darkness.

There was nothing to do, that was one of the terrible aspects of the situation, nothing to do but watch the horizon and wait. And in that unfrequented part of the ocean there was nothing to wait for but death. When daylight came Roger buried the two negroes. Poor wretches, he thought, but he knew that before it was finished he would envy them the merciful suddenness of their going. Toward night, in order to occupy his mind, he dug up the chests and found that truly they were full of sand. There was no disappointment in that for if they had held diamonds he could not have bartered them for a tiful of water. Sand was as good as gold in that place where nothing of value could be bought.



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Before the second morning his tormenting thirst had become an obsession and he was powerless to relieve it. The endless lapping of the salt waves drove the agony deeper and deeper into his brain like blows from a hammer. He sucked a pebble until his swollen tongue no longer made room for it in his mouth. He prayed for a storm that might bring rain or drive a ship his way, but the sky was serene and he knew there would be no rain for months. So overshadowing was thirst that hunger was forgotten, which was one mercy. And gradually, toward the close of the fourth day, everything began to be forgotten. Half delirious, he had drunk sea water, knowing and not caring that such an act was the signal of surrender. Crawling on his hands and knees, fainting, reviving and crawling on in some subconscious hope of finding help, he reached his lookout on the rocks. It was sunset and, raising himself on one elbow, he took a final look around the horizon. It was merely mechanical action, some sort of last involuntary gesture against death, for his brain was too weak to register what his eyes saw. Whether that was a sail or a seabird in the southwest made no difference to him.

While he lay there, still breathing, the ship bore in and anchored off the island in the darkness. She knew the place well for she had left her commander there four days before and was now returning for his treasure which the crew had not dared to fight for then. The old tiger would have downed a dozen of them before they could have landed and finished him, but now, even if he were alive, he would be too weak to resist.

At dawn they saw the prostrate form on the rocks and came ashore, jeering at the Old Man they had outwitted.



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“Saint’s blood!” cried the one who reached him first.  
“This is a lad!”

“The fiend’s work!” another gasped, as he tried to remember how to cross himself. “The Old Man has changed his form!”

“Fools! He’s some castaway,” the mate said.  
“Then where’s the Old Man?”  
“Search the island.”  
“We can see it all from here and he ain’t on it.”  
“I tell ye, he’s changed hisself into a bird and flew away.”

“There’s the treasure chests!” They rushed upon them.  
“Full o’ sand!” They formed a ring and stared.  
“He’s changed the gold to sand,” persisted the one who believed in miracles.

“The castaway done it. He’s dug up the gold.”  
“But where’s the Old Man?”  
“Got away somehow.”  
“Then ‘e took the gold. I knows ‘im.”  
“I tell ye, it’s the fiend’s work. Git back to the ship.”  
“Fools!” the mate roared again. “The castaway holds the key to this.”  
“E’s dead.”  
“He ain’t.”  
“E’s good as dead.”

“Heave him to the sharks!” another cried in disappointment.

“Ye’ll do nothin’ like that.” The mate drew his pistols.  
“Ye’ll take him aboard and ye’ll nurse him back to life like he was yer own mother’s son. It’s him and him alone that can give us the treasure.”

There was sense in that and they saw it, so they bore



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Roger to the ship and with all their skill, which was considerable, they drew him back into the world he had so nearly left. And when he was finally in the land of the living once more, with the deck of the old pirate craft rolling under his feet and the island to starboard bringing him memories of torment, he said wearily to the mate, "It was all done for treasure! The thought sickens me."

"But where is the treasure?" the mate asked, and the pirates pressed close for the answer.

"I know where it is." Roger felt a thrill at the power he had over them.

"We'll give ye a share," the mate promised.

"You will not." The boy shuddered. "It's blood money a thousand times over."

"Ye'd best tell where it is." A threatening buzz arose.

"I'll bargain with you first. In the captain's cabin on this ship are papers taken from the *Rose of Jamaica*. When you set me ashore in Jamaica with those papers in my possession, I will tell you where the treasure is. I give you my word that every penny of it shall be yours. Kill me here and you will lose it all." He looked into the fierce eyes about him.

He had the cards and his hand could not be forced. There were curses and threats, but eventually on a dark night he was rowed ashore at a point where the hills of Jamaica meet the sea. There he completed his story to the mate and told where the treasure lay under the cabin floor. Then he turned and ran toward the town where the lights of home twinkled peacefully.



# Turn and Turn About

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND



THE BRIG "Caravan", of Salem, Massachusetts, was dropping along the east coast of Madagascar on a June day in 1812. In the cabin sat the master, Jason Bridge; Seth Starbuck, the sixteen-year-old cabin-boy, had just finished pouring fish-oil into a big brass lantern.

Captain Bridge gave a sigh. "Fetch me the log and the quill and ink-pot, Seth, and set 'em on the table."

Seth opened a locker, took out the articles mentioned, and arranged them neatly on the table in front of the brig's master.

"I'd rather handle a cutlass any day than drive a quill pen," grumbled the captain. "Seth, be sure you larn to make pothooks while you're young, before your fingers are all thumbs."

"Aye, sir," answered the boy with a grin. "I went to school in Salem, to Miss Mehitable Langton's."

"I know her; a right pretty gal, with long yellow hair."

"It's mostly gray now, sir—what there is of it."

"That's because she's had to teach young rascals like



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you to make pothooks." The captain dipped his quill in the ink and gave another sigh. Then laboriously he began to write up the log. "N. E. of the island of Madagascar. Weather warm. Light N. W. breezes. Sail sighted S.E. . . ."

Seth wiped the lantern and commenced to polish it. He knew the captain wanted to talk—not to sweat over his writing. And sure enough, after a minute or so the master pushed the log-book away and threw down the quill. "Speaking of Miss Mehitabel," said he, "she's about the only person in Salem who don't own some of our cargo. 'Caravan's' the right name for this brig; she carries everything. Mr. Thorndike—he's one of the ship's owners—gave me three thousand dollars to invest for him and a like amount for his aunt and two nieces. Others wanted knick-knacks for their wives; carnelian necklaces, camel's-hair shawls, cobweb muslin, and mull. Some of the women gave me money to fetch 'em straw carpets, bed covers, pots of ginger; and three little gals handed me a dollar apiece to buy them something in Calcutta. I bought 'em bandana handkerchiefs, red and green and purple."

"They'll be right glad to see you back, sir," said Seth. "They'll all be down on Derby Wharf."

"I must find something for Miss Mehitabel, a shawl or jar of ginger." The captain's blue eyes shone, he rubbed his hands. "It's been a prosperous voyage, lad. Business was good in Canton and India. Now, once around the Cape of Good Hope and we'll be in the Atlantic and scudding for home."

"No pirates in the Atlantic," chuckled Seth.

"No," conceded the captain, "but we ain't thar yet. We're off the coast of Africa, and there's heathen rajahs



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in Madagascar and Zanzibar. Don't you forget that, Seth. We're still in pirate waters."

The brig sailed in a light breeze along the indented shore. The sun set behind the mountains, and a full moon gilded the sea. Seth was watching the glittering moon-path when he saw a long, low dark shape steal across it, then another, and another. He heard the shouts of lookouts from bow and stern, the patter of feet as the sailors ran to the rail.

Captain Bridge strode out on deck, and Seth hurried to him. "Pirates, sir?" he cried in a voice that quivered with excitement.

"Aye," agreed the captain. "Some crazy sultan thinks he can board us." He gave a contemptuous grunt.

Now Seth could see a swarm of canoes in which the moonlight silvered assagais and spears. Paddles rose and fell. The canoes looked like big black beetles with enormous legs.

The canoes were half-way out from shore when Captain Bridge spoke to the chief mate. "The rascallions can't understand English, Mr. Dwight, so I reckon we'd better speak to them in another tongue. Fire one of the six-pounders, sir, and aim at the front of the boats."

Seth heard the six-pounder roar. A geyser sprang up from the sea, and with it went the fragments of a canoe. Immediately the air was filled with howls; the water was a maelstrom of scattered boats, and the pirates were screeching like frightened macaws.

"Shall I fire another, sir?" asked the chief mate.  
"I don't think that will be necessary," answered Captain Bridge. "It would only be a waste of powder and ball."



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Seth could see that the one six-pounder had settled the pirates' business. He felt almost sorry that the attack had ended so quickly. Then, to his surprise, he heard the whistle of another cannon-ball and saw a second geyser spurt into the air as round shot struck the waves.

Captain Bridge wheeled around. "I said not to waste more powder," he cried angrily.

Seth was leaning over the rail, peering toward the east. "We didn't fire, sir!" he exclaimed. "There's a ship coming round that point of land, and she fired that shot."

The captain turned and started. "Appears to be a British cruiser. Yes, there's her flag. Well, she's come a trifle late to help us fight the pirates. We don't need her aid."

Seth chuckled. That was evident. The canoes that were not already kindling-wood were dashing madly for shore. But, to his amazement, more round shot were splashing in the water, nearer and nearer to the brig.

"What in blazes—" stormed Captain Bridge.

"They're firing at us!" yelled Seth, and clutched at the rail as a broadside thundered from the cruiser and shot came plunking into the "Caravan's" hull, luckily doing little harm.

Captain Bridge barked an order to fire all his six-pounders. The brig shivered with their recoil; shivered yet more violently as the cruiser's cannon-balls ripped and tore her timbers. Seth jumped to a gun and helped the crew load and fire. Five minutes were sufficient, however, to show that the merchantman, with her light armament, was no match for the big batteries of the British war-ship. Another five minutes and Captain Bridge, to save his crew from slaughter, was forced to strike his flag.





Seth saw a long, low dark shape steal across the moon-path



## *Turn and Turn About*

Seth saw a gig cross the water and a young officer in a smart uniform spring over the "Caravan's" side. Captain Bridge stepped forward to receive him. "By what right, sir," he demanded, "does a British cruiser fire on a merchant ship that flies the flag of the United States?"

The Englishman bowed. "By the right of warfare, sir," he answered. "You have doubtless been so long at sea that you are ignorant of the fact that His Britannic Majesty's government and that of your country are now at war."

"At war!" exclaimed the amazed captain. "When did this war begin?"

"This very month. Therefore, as you will appreciate, His Majesty's cruiser "Valiant" was obliged to capture your brig as an enemy prize. Captain Clifford will come aboard presently. In the meantime, my orders are to take command of your ship."

There was nothing for Captain Bridge to do but acquiesce. He was a man of sense, who never cried over spilt milk, but always tried to see whether some of what was spilled might not be lapped up.

Captain Clifford, a red-faced, well-fed man in dress uniform, was escorted to the cabin by Lieutenant Haselton, the young officer now in charge of the "Caravan." Captain Bridge was courtesy itself; he directed Seth to fill the gentlemen's glasses and bowed them to seats.

"A very fine vintage, Captain Bridge," said the commander of the cruiser, when he had sampled the wine. "No doubt you've had a prosperous voyage."

"I've bought necklaces and shawls, and pots of ginger and handkerchiefs, for most all the people of Salem," was the other's rejoinder.



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“Oh, but there must be more than such things in your hold!” exclaimed the Englishman. “I’ll warrant there are tea and coffee, silks, spices, and valuable China ware.” He smiled as he thought of his share of the prize-money for the brig’s cargo; then turned to the business in hand. Lieutenant Haselton and a dozen sailors from the “Valiant,” Captain Clifford declared, should sail the “Caravan” to the English port of Dover; the American crew of fifteen seamen should be placed in irons in the brig’s hold and handed over to the port officials as prisoners of war.

“You’ll need a cook,” said Captain Clifford, looking at the lieutenant.

“There’s a negro cook aboard the brig, sir,” Haselton observed.

“Let him stay in the galley then, and cook for you. You’ll also want a boy to serve your meals and do your errands.”

“Here’s a handy lad, sir.” The lieutenant nodded at Seth, who had just refilled the wine glasses.

“Use him, then.”

“And the brig’s master, sir?”

“Ah, yes.” Captain Clifford glanced at Jason Bridge. “I don’t think we need to put him in irons, Mr. Haselton. He’ll do no harm alone and he’ll be pleasant company for you.”

Next morning repairs were made on the brig, and by noon the “Valiant” had resumed her cruise to the north, while the “Caravan” was again on the southward reach toward the Cape of Good Hope.

Seth took his orders from the lieutenant. What a sorry turn of fortune this was, he reflected gloomily. He had expected soon to be home after his long voyage; and now



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here were he and the brig's crew destined to languish in an English prison, perhaps for years. But when he saw Captain Bridge pacing the deck that was no longer his, or sitting idle in the cabin, Seth forgot his own troubles; the grizzled, weather-beaten master, who had been like a father to him, had never lost a ship before, and now it was likely he would never command another.

Yet Captain Bridge did not appear downcast when Seth waited on him and Mr. Haselton at meals. The lieutenant, who was in his early twenties and highly pleased at commanding such a rich prize, asked him about his voyages, and the captain told of the many wonderful places he had seen. "But the finest of all is Salem," Jason Bridge would generally conclude. "You really ought to see Salem, sir."

"Perhaps some day," Mr. Haselton would laugh. "But not until this war is over."

The brig winged south of Madagascar and presently was rounding the foot of Africa. So far the weather had been fine; now it abruptly altered. Seth could see that a storm was brewing, a gale riding up from the southeast. He watched Lieutenant Haselton and the British sailors and wondered if they intended to keep the ship under full canvas.

Finding Captain Bridge alone in the cabin, Seth said: "There's going to be a storm, sir, a howling big one."

"Aye, there is," said the captain, knocking the ashes from his pipe.

"Does that English lieutenant know how to handle a ship like this in a big storm, sir?"

"That's what we're going to find out, Seth, and mighty quick."



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"Don't you think you ought to tell him to take in sail, sir?" Seth persisted.

Captain Bridge shook his head. "I'm a prisoner. He'd take it as an insult. He's very young and cock-sure, and this is his first ship."

"But our men are shackled in the hold, sir! We don't want the brig wrecked and all of them drowned."

"No, that wouldn't do, Seth. Our men shackled—You've given me an idee. Come on deck and we'll take a squint at those blooming British tars."

When they came out from the companion the sky was the color of ink. The gale had become a hurricane, and the brig was pitching wildly under all her straining canvas. Captain Bridge grunted and pointed to the poop-deck. "Look thar, Seth! That fool of a Haselton has waited to the last minute, and now I'm hanged if he ain't sending every last one of his men aloft to take in sail."

Seth nodded, and said excitedly: "There's no one on deck but us and the lieutenant. They're all crawling out on the yards."

"And thar they'll stay for a time, boy, in a wind like this. It's down to the galley for you and me."

In the galley was the negro cook, Solomon Jones. Captain Bridge picked up a poker, tossed a hammer to Seth, a chisel to the cook. "Now to the hold!" he chuckled. "We can git the irons off the men in jig-time!"

In no time the Captain had freed his crew from their shackles and was leading them to the after-cabin, where he knocked the padlocks from the arms-chests and handed out cutlasses, pistols, powder, and bullets.

Silent as hunting tigers, the Yankee sailors crept on



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deck, to find the whole superstructure shrouded in a thick mist. Aloft the voices of the British crew could be heard calling to each other, as the seamen still worked at the sails. Immediately Mr. Dwight vanished forward; the other Yankees stole along the slanting deck. Seth, his pistol loaded and cocked, ran noiselessly through the murky darkness to the poop.

He saw a dim shape, and jumped cat-like toward it. "Up with your hands!" he ordered in a low, tense voice. "And don't call out!"

"What the devil—" cried Lieutenant Háselton, and snatched at the pistol under his coat.

Seth leaped at him—to fire would be to warn the Britishers up in the rigging—but another was before him. Captain Bridge had caught the lieutenant in his left arm and his right hand was clamped across the officer's mouth. •

"Take his pistol and cutlass, Seth," ordered the captain. "Now, Haselton, will you give me your word of honor not to speak, or must I throttle you? Come, come, be sensible. It's the fortune of war, you know."

The lieutenant, his breath nearly squeezed out of him by the captain's bear-like grip, managed to nod his head.

Seth ran forward. At the foot of each mast there was a group of Yankee sailors. Down the rigging of the main-mast came a British seaman, descending cautiously in the thick mist. He jumped to the deck. Instantly a pistol-butt caught him on the head. As he fell he was seized and gagged, irons were clapped on his wrists, and he was dragged away before another should descend.

Man by man the British crew came down, each one ignorant of what was happening on deck.



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Meantime, Mr. Dwight had felled the helmsman and taken the wheel. In fifteen minutes the last of the prize-crew had been captured, ironed, and bestowed in the hold. "Now, Solomon," Captain Bridge said to the cook, "a ration of hot grog for every man Jack, and your best raisin pudding for supper!"

Seth served the boiled salt meat and the raisin pudding to the captain and Mr. Haselton that evening in the cabin. Jason Bridge was the pink of politeness. "No doubt," he said to the young Englishman, "you're wishing that Captain Clifford had put Seth and me in irons along with the rest of the crew. It was his mistake, not yours. Howsoever, one good turn deserves another, and you shall have the freedom of the ship, same as I did."

Lieutenant Haselton, like Captain Bridge, was not a man to cry over spilt milk. As he set down his glass of rum and water he gave a wry smile. "Well, sir," he said, "it looks, after all, as if I might see Salem before the end of this war."

Soon the brig had left the Cape of Good Hope in its wake and was in the South Atlantic. Seth, always observant of the captain's moods, began to wonder what problem was vexing the latter's mind. Then one morning the captain spoke.

"We've got food enough to carry our own crew back to Salem, but not enough to feed the prisoners. By golly! Seth, I would like mighty to bring Captain Clifford's prize-crew safe into Salem Harbor."

Seth studied the chart. "It's not so far to the West Indies as to Salem, sir."

"That's so. We might be able to reach 'em with the stores we have aboard."



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"I've always heard that those islands were a nest of privateers."

Jason Bridge looked puzzled, then after a minute he grinned and chuckled. "I get you, Seth," he said.

At sunset of a summer day the brig came to anchor in a small bay ringed with palms. "Do we pick cocoanuts here, or other West Indian fruits?" Mr. Haselton asked the captain.

"You're feeling mighty hungry, eh?" said the brig's master. "So am I. Well, I cal'late to fill up every man aboard by tomorrow morning, with a bit o' luck."

The moon was rising above the palms when a brig flying the British merchant-flag came creeping around the horn of the bay to the south.

At the captain's order the "Caravan" slipped out to intercept the stranger.

"Let her have it, Mr. Dwight!" cried Captain Bridge. "And tell the men they're fighting for their suppers. That'll put ginger in 'em."

In a cloud of smoke the vessels swung together; Captain Bridge ordered grappling-hooks thrown to the other's rail and he himself led the boarding party, cutlass in hand.

"Where's the master?" Captain Bridge demanded of a huddled group.

"Here," said a man, stepping forth. "I'm Captain Bluett, of the British brig "Star of Devon," trading from Kingston to Halifax."

"Well, sir," said Bridge, "you can keep your ship, your crew, and cargo. I'm no pirate. I want only two things; the first and most important is food, and the second is guns and ammunition—in case I have to fight cruisers on the way home."



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That was good news to Captain Bluett, who had thought that he had fallen into the hands of savage buccaneers.

Soon the "Caravan's" galley was a scene of greater activity than it had been for days. While the men feasted in their quarters, Captain Jason and Lieutenant Haselton banqueted in the cabin. "This is better than cocoanuts, eh?" said Bridge to the Englishman. "You don't reproach me now for capturing the 'Star of Devon'?"

"Reproach you?" said Haselton, helping himself to another slice of ham, exquisitely broiled by the negro cook. "I bless you with every mouthful. You're a great man, Captain Bridge; you should be an admiral of the fleet. If it be not disloyalty on my part to say so, I find myself hoping that you may bring your ship safely back to Salem."

Fortunately for Captain Jason, the English had not yet established much of a patrol along the coast of the United States. With favoring winds he scudded on, swinging around the long hook of Cape Cod, and finally, at long last, brought his ship around Peach's Point to Salem.

Through the crowd that always gathered to see an East Indiaman arrive, Mr. Enoch Thorndike, chief owner of the brig, pushed his way with an air of authority. Across the landing-plank he stalked and shook Captain Jason by the hand. "Welcome home, Captain," he said. "I had some doubts for your safety. This war with England. . . . More than one Salem ship has been captured by the enemy."

"The brig was captured, Mr. Thorndike, off the east coast of Madagascar, by the English cruiser 'Valiant'."



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"What!" exclaimed the merchant. "But how in thunder, Jason, did they come to let you go?"

When Captain Bridge had told his story, Mr. Thorndike swore admiringly. "Gad! What a feat, Jason! But this English lieutenant—"

Bridge held up his hand. "He's a gentleman, sir, and a particular friend of mine." Therewith he turned to Haselton.

The young Englishman was presented to the merchant, who shook hands with him cordially. "Now, Mr. Thorndike," said Bridge, "there are in the hold the 'Valiant's' prize-crew, who will be handed over to the authorities as prisoners of war. For Mr. Haselton, however, I would bespeak a different treatment. I have told him much about the hospitality of Salem, and should like to have him as my guest for a day or two—dine him at the tavern—before I turn him over to the government."

"I see no objection to that," said Mr. Thorndike.

The matting-covered bales of cargo were brought up from the hold under the supervision of the chief mate; counting-house clerks were busy seeing to the checking and unloading. Captain Jason and Mr. Haselton went ashore and up to the former's bachelor home.

The afternoon waned while they smoked and chatted. The Captain showed his guest some of his trophies: porcelain, jade, silks, brought back from earlier voyages to Far Eastern seas. "In that chest are East Indian robes," he said, pointing to a box that stood in his sitting-room, "complete from turban to slippers—all that those fellows wear. Capital costume for a masquerade.

"There are some East Indians here," he went on. "You



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will see Orientals in the streets of Salem, men who have shipped in crews from the Indian ports. I've picked up ointments on my travels." He waved to a cabinet. "There are jars of creams in there that will make a fair skin as brown as mahogany." He chuckled. "At a fancy-dress party, now, I could pass muster as an Oriental—color of skin, turban, Eastern clothes, and all."

Presently he talked of other things; of travel by land in New England, of the coaches that ran from Salem to Boston, of others that went north to Portsmouth, and thence to Portland and to Bath.

Haselton listened attentively. "You may want to make some purchases," Bridge said. "I'll trade you Yankee coins for the British in your purse."

"You think of everything, Captain," smiled the lieutenant as they made the exchange.

On the way to supper at the tavern they met Seth Starbuck, and the captain, in generous mood, invited the boy to eat with them. He ordered the best the inn could provide and the three did full justice to it. Then with glass of flip in one hand and long clay pipe in the other, Bridge nodded across at Haselton. "I shall sit here for hours with my pipe and grog, chatting with any cronies who come in," he said genially. "But doubtless you are sleepy, my friend. Go to my house and make yourself free with any of my things."

"Thank you, Captain," said the young Englishman; and with a smile at Bridge and a nod to Seth he withdrew from the tavern.

Some time later the captain and the boy walked up Derby Street and stopped before Bridge's dwelling. A



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watchman was pacing the footway and Captain Jason spoke to him. "Seen any one come out from my door?" he queried casually.

"One of those Indiamen," the watchman answered. "Tall, dark man in a turban."

"Oh, that fellow Yat Singh," grunted Bridge and turned indifferently away.

"Who is he, sir?" asked Seth.

"A Hindoo who's going north on the early morning coach. I think he plans to go to Portland and then on by horse as far as Canada." Bridge pushed open his house door. "Come in for a minute, Seth. I told Mr. Dwight to send up my personal chests and bales from the brig, and if they're here now I'd like you to help me pick out a nice shawl for Miss Mehitable Langton."





# The Capture of a Brig

By STEPHEN MEADER

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As the pirate sloop raced southward under full sail, the form of the other ship became steadily plainer. She was a brig, high-pooped, and tall-masted, and apparently deeply laden. Major Bonnet, who had come up at the first warning, seemed his old cool self as he conned the enemy through a spy-glass. Jeremy had been detailed as a sort of errand boy, and as he stood at the Captain's side he heard him speaking to Herriot.

"She's British, right enough," he was saying. "I can make out her flag; but how many guns, 'tis harder to tell. She sees us now, I think, for they seem to be shaking out a topsail . . . Ah, now, I can see the sun shine on her broad-side—two . . . three . . . five in the lower port tier, and three more above—sixteen in all. 'Twill be a fight, it seems!"

Aboard the *Royal James* the men were slaving like ants, preparing for the battle. Every man knew his duties. The gunners and swabbers were putting their cannon in fettle below decks. Others were rolling out round-shot from the



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hold and storing powder in iron-cased lockers behind the guns. Great tubs of sea water were placed conveniently in the 'tween-decks and blankets were put to soak for use in case of fire. Buckets of vinegar water for swabbing the guns were laid handy. In the galley the cook made hot grog. Cutlasses were looked after, pistols cleaned and loaded and muskets set out for close firing. Jeremy was sent hither and thither on every imaginable mission, a tremendous excitement running in his veins.

The sloop gained rapidly on her prey, hauling over to windward as she sailed, and when the two ships were almost within cannon range, Stede Bonnet with his own hand bent the "Jolly Roger" to the lanyard and sent the great black flag with its skull and crossbones to fly from the mast head. The grog was served out. No man would have believed that the roaring, rollicking gang of cut-throats who tossed off their liquor in cheers and ribald laughter was identical with the grumbling, sour-faced crew of twenty hours before. As they finished, something came skipping over the water astern and the first echoing report followed close. The cannonade was on.

A loud yell of defiance swept the length of the *Royal James* as the men went to their posts. The gun decks ran along both sides of the sloop a few feet above the water line. They were like alleyways beneath the main deck, barely wide enough to admit the passage of a man or a keg of powder behind the gun-carriages. These latter were not fixed to the planking as afterward became the fashion, but ran on trucks and were kept in their places by rope tackles. In action, the recoil had to be taken up by men who held the ends of these ropes, rove through pulleys in the vessel's



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side. Despite their efforts the gun would sometimes leap back against the bulkhead hard enough to shatter it. As the charge for each reloading had to be carried sometimes half the length of the ship by hand, it is easy to see that the men who served the guns needed some strength and agility in getting past the jumping carriages.

Jeremy was sent below to help the gunners, as the shot from the merchantman continued to scream by. Job Howland was a gunner on the port side and the boy naturally lent his services to the one man aboard that he could call his friend. There was much bustle in the alley behind the closed ports but surprisingly little confusion was apparent. The discipline seemed better than at any time since the boy had been brought aboard the black sloop.

Job was ramming the wad home on the charge of powder in his bow gun. The other four guns in the port deck were being loaded at the same time, three men tending each one.

"Here, lad," sang out Job, as he put the single iron shot in at the muzzle, "take one o' the wet blankets out o' yon tub an' stand by to fight sparks." Jeremy did as he was bid, then got out of the way as the ports were flung open and the guns run forward, with their evil bronze noses thrust out into the sunlight.

The sloop, running swiftly with the wind abeam, had now drawn abreast of her unwieldy adversary. The merchant captain, apparently, finding himself outspeeded and being unable to spare his gun crews to trim sail, had put the head of his ship into the wind, where she stood, with canvas flapping, her bow offering a steady mark to the pirate.



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“Ready a port broadside!” came Bonnet’s ringing order, and then—“Fire!” Job Howland’s blazing match went to the touch-hole at the word and his six-pounder, roaring merrily, jumped back two good feet against the straining ropes of the tackle. Instantly the next gun spoke and the next and so on, all five in a space of a bare ten seconds. Had they been fired simultaneously they might have shaken the ship to pieces. Jeremy was half-deafened, and his whole body was jarred. Thick black smoke hung in the alleyway, for the ports had been closed in order to reload in greater safety. The boy felt the deck heel to starboard under him and thought at first that a shot had caught them under the waterline, but when he was sent above to find out whether the broadside had taken effect, he found that the sloop had come about and was already driving north still to windward of the enemy. Bonnet was giving his gunners more time to load by running back and forth and using his batteries alternately. Herriot had the tiller and in response to Jeremy’s question he pointed to the fluttering rags of the brig’s foresail and the smoke that issued from a splintered hole under her bow chains.

Below in the gun deck the buccaneers, sweating by their pieces, heard the news with cheers. The sloop shook to the jarring report of the starboard battery a moment later, and hardly had it ceased when she came about on the other tack. “Hurrah,” cried Job’s mates, “we’ll show him this time! Wind an’ water—wind an’ water!”

The open traps showed the green seas swirling past close below, and off across the swells the tall side of the merchantman swaying in the trough of the waves. “Ready!” came the order and every gunner jumped to the breech,



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match in hand. Before the command came to fire there was a crash of splintering wood, and a long, intermittent roar came over the water. The brig had taken advantage of her falling off the wind to deliver a broadside in her own turn. Stede Bonnet's voice, cool as ever, gave the order and four guns answered the brig's discharge. The crew of the middle cannon lay on the deck in a pitiable state, two killed outright and the gunner bleeding from a great splinter wound in the head. A shot had entered to one side of the port, tearing the planking to bits and after striking down the two gun-servers, had passed into the fo'c'sle. Jeremy jumped forward with his blanket in time to stamp out a blaze where the firing-match had been dropped, and with the help of one of the pirates dragged the wounded man to his berth. Almost every shot of the last volley had done damage aboard the brig. Her freeboard, twice as high as that of the sloop, had offered a target which for expert gunners was hard to miss. Jagged openings showed all along her side, and as she rose on a swell, Job shouted, "See there! She's leakin' now. 'Twas my last shot did that —right on her water-line!"

"All hands on deck to board her!" came a shout, almost at the same instant. Jeremy hurrying up with the rest found the sloop bearing down straight before the wind, and only a dozen boat's lengths from the enemy.

A wild whoop went up among the pirates. Every man had seized on a musket and was crouching behind the rail. Bonnet alone stood on the open deck, his buff coat blowing open and his hand resting lightly on his sword. An occasional cannon shot screamed overhead or splashed away astern. Apparently the brig's batteries were too



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greatly damaged and her crew too badly shot up to offer an effective bombardment. She was drifting helplessly under tattered ribbons of canvas and the *Royal James*, whose sails had suffered far less, bore down upon her opponent with the swoop of a hawk. As she drew close aboard a scattered fusillade of small arms broke out from the brig's poop, wounding one man, a Portuguese, but for the most part striking harmlessly against the bulwark. The buccaneers held their fire till they were scarce a boat's length distant. Then at the order they swept the ship with a withering musket volley. The brig was down by the head and lay almost bow on so that her deck was exposed to Bonnet's marksmen. Herriot brought his sloop about like a flash and almost before Jeremy realized what was toward, the ships had bumped together side by side, and the howling mob of pirates was swarming over the enemy's rail. Job Howland and another man took great boathooks, with which they grappled the brig's ports and kept the two vessels from drifting apart. Jeremy was alone upon the sloop's deck. He put the thickness of the mast between him and the hail of bullets and peered fearfully out at the terrible scene above.

The crew of the brig had been too much disorganized to repel the boarders as well as they might, and the entire horde of wild barbarians had scrambled to her deck, where a perfect inferno now held sway. The air seemed full of flying cutlasses that produced an incessant hiss and clangor. Pistols banged deafeningly at close quarters and there was the constant undertone of groans, cries and bellowed oaths. Above the din came the terrible, clear voice of Stede Bonnet, urging on his seadogs. He had become a



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different man from the moment his foot touched the merchantman's deck. From the cool commander he had changed to a devil incarnate, with face distorted, eyes aflame, and a sword that hacked and stabbed with the swift ferocity of lightning. Jeremy saw him, fighting single-handed with three men. His long sword played in and out, to the right and to the left with a turn and a flash then, whirling, swiftly, pinned a man who had run up behind. Bonnet's feet moved quickly, shifting ground as stealthily as a cat's and in a second he had leaped to a safer position with his back to the after-house: Two of his opponents were down, and the third fighting wearily and without confidence, when a huge, flaxen-haired man burst from the hatch to the deck and swung his broad cutlass to such effect that the battling groups in his path gave way to either side. The burly form of Dave Herriot opposed the new enemy and as the two giants squared off, sword ringing on sword, more than one wounded sailor raised himself to a better position, grinning with the Anglo-Saxon's unquenchable love of a fair fight. Herriot was no mean swordsman of the rough and ready seaman's type and had a great physique as well, but his previous labors—he had been the first man on board and had already accounted for a fair share of the defenders—had rendered him slow and arm-weary. The ready parrying, blade to blade, ceased suddenly as his foot slipped backward in a pool of blood. The blond seaman seized his advantage and swung a slicing blow that glanced off Herriot's forehead, and felled the huge buccaneer to the deck where he lay stunned, the quick red staining his head-cloth. As the blond-haired man stepped forward to finish the business, a long, keen,



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straight blade interposed, caught his cutlass in an upward parry and at the same time poked him painfully in the arm.

Jumping back the seaman found himself faced by the pitiless eyes of Stede Bonnet, who had killed his last opponent and run in to save his mate's life. That quick, daring sword baffled the sailor. Swing and hack as he might, his blows were caught in midair and fell away harmless, while always the relentless point drove him back and back. Forced to the rail, he stood his ground desperately, pale and glistening with the sweat of a man in the fear of death. Then his sword flew up, the pirate captain stabbed him through the throat and with a dying gasp the limp body fell backward into the sea.

Meanwhile the pirates had steadily gained ground in the hand-to-hand struggle and now a bare half-dozen brave fellows held on, fighting singly or in pairs, back to back. The brig's captain, wounded in several places and seeing his crew in a fair way to be annihilated, flung up a tired arm and cried for quarter. Almost at once the fighting ceased and half the combatants, utterly exhausted, sank down among their dead and wounded fellows. The deck was a long shambles, red from the bits to the poop.

While the hands of the prisoners were being bound, Bonnet and all of his men not otherwise employed hurried below to search for loot. The man who had held the boat-hook astern left this task and greedily clambered up the brig's side lest he should miss his chance at the booty. Job alone stuck to his post, and motioned Jeremy to stay where he was. Cheers and yells of joy rang from the after-hold of the merchantman where the pirates had evidently discovered the ship's store of wine.





The limp body fell backward into the sea



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After a few moments Pharaoh Daggs thrust his scarred face out of the companion, and with a fierce roar of laughter waved a black bottle above his head. The others followed, drinking and babbling curses, and last of all Stede Bonnet, pale, dishevelled, mad with blood and liquor, stood bareheaded by the hatch. He raised his hand in a gesture of silence and all the hub-bub ceased. "We have beaten them!" he cried between twitching lips. "I, Captain Thomas, the chiefest of all the pirates, and my bully-boys of the *Royal James*! We'll show 'em all! We'll show 'em all! Blackbeard and all the rest! He, he, he!" and his voice trailed off in crazy laughter.





# Pirate Gold

By CHARLES COPPOCK

THE SHOP of Captain Judd stood in a dark, narrow street of the old city of Batavia, when, many years ago, this city was a seaport on the island of Java. The shop was a queer old place. On its shelves lay coils of rope, kegs of oil and wine, and many bottles of rum and whisky. All the sailors of the Indian Ocean and the Yellow Sea came to trade in this queer old shop of Captain Judd's.

On a summer morning in the year 1636, there came to the shop of Captain Judd a huge man with a black beard. He wore a black cocked hat, a long blue coat, and large gold rings in his ears. With him came a little boy. On his back the man carried a large ironbound box. He put the box down on the floor of the shop, and the little boy sat down on it. The boy had curly yellow hair, and he wore red stockings, black shoes, and a long blue coat.

“Yes?” said Captain Judd. “What is it you want? I have tea from India. I have coils of rope, kegs of oil, and finest wine. I have rum from Jamaica and whisky from Virginia. What is it you want?”



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

The huge man with the black beard came close to Captain Judd. He caught the old man by the shoulder and shook him hard. "Listen!" said the man with the black beard in a low voice, "if you ever breathe a word of what I'm going to tell you, you'll surely die! Can you keep your mouth shut, Captain Judd?"

Captain Judd grew pale. He drew back quickly. "Yes!" he said, half whispering. His voice shook a little and he looked away from the huge man with the black beard.

"Then," said the black-bearded man, "I'll tell you just this one thing. I haven't long to live. I know they are going to kill me very soon. I cannot escape them. This boy is my son. I want you to take him and care for him. See that no harm comes to him. Whatever happens, don't let them get my son, Captain Judd!"

"But I don't understand you," said Captain Judd. "Who is going to kill you? Who are you, anyway?"

"That is none of your business, Captain Judd," said the man with the black beard. "Will you do as I ask and say nothing to anyone about this as long as you live?"

"I will," said Captain Judd, looking more carefully at the yellow-haired boy as he sat there in the shop on the big, strange box.

"One thing more," said the man fiercely. "You must swear it upon this Bible." He took from his pocket a small black Bible and held it out in his hand.

Captain Judd put his right hand upon the Bible. "I swear," he said, "by all that is in this Book to keep my word and to keep your son from harm."

"Is that all?" asked Captain Judd. "Shall I see you again?"



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"No, you will never see me again," said the black-bearded man. "And one thing more: I am leaving this box with you." With these words the man went out of the shop, without looking back at the little boy sitting there on the iron-bound box.

"What is your name?" Captain Judd asked the boy.

"I have no name," said the yellow-haired boy, and he smiled.

"What is in that iron-bound box?" asked Captain Judd.

"My clothes," said the boy, and he smiled again.

"And you have no name!" said old Captain Judd. "Then I'll call you Java, after the island we live on. How do you like that name?"

"I like it," said the boy.

Java and Captain Judd carried the big box to the back of the shop. Together they took out the gay, rich clothes. There were coats of bright red, green, and blue cloth, and trousers of white and gold silk. There were high-heeled, red-leather boots. Java and Captain Judd hung the gay clothes on the dark walls of the shop.

For two years Java lived with old Captain Judd in the shop on the narrow street of old Batavia. Captain Judd grew to love him as if Java were his own son.

All the sailors from the Indian Ocean and the Yellow Sea came to trade in the little shop. Java would stand up proudly and smile and say to them, "We have tea from India. We have coils of rope, kegs of oil, and the finest wine. We have rum from Jamaica and whisky from Virginia. What do you want?"

On summer mornings Java would stand in the doorway of the little shop, his hair shining gold in the sun. He



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

would watch the ships come sailing into the harbor. From the doorway of the shop he would stand and wave at them when they sailed away. If he loved anything more than Captain Judd, Java loved the ships and the sea. His blue eyes always seemed to be looking toward the far-off places of the earth.

Early one morning Java saw a strange ship come sailing into the harbor. He ran back to the shop.

"Captain Judd! Captain Judd!" cried Java. "Come and see what a strange ship has come to Batavia. She looks like a man-o'-war!" Captain Judd came to the doorway and looked out. There, in the middle of the harbor, stood a ship with sails as black as night. She flew no flag. All along her sides the black mouths of guns stuck out.

"She does look like a man-o'-war," said Captain Judd, "but she flies no flag. I wonder what kind of ship she is. Can you see her name from here, Java? My old eyes are too dim to see."

"She has no name," said Java.

Captain Judd caught the boy by the shoulder. "Come inside! Come inside!" he cried. "We must not stand here!"

As soon as they were inside the shop, Captain Judd closed the door firmly and fastened the lock.

"What's the matter, Captain Judd?" cried Java. "Why do you lock the door?"

"Be quiet, Java!" said the old man, and his voice shook a little. "Be quiet! Don't make a sound!"

Then they were both very quiet as they stood there in the dim little shop. Java could hear his own breath making a faint, whispering sound, but nothing more.

Soon they heard heavy footsteps coming along the street



## *Pirate Gold*

outside the locked door. There came presently a loud knock on the door. Captain Judd did not answer. Java made no sound. In the little shop all was very dim and still.

Again the loud knock came, and again. Then a loud voice shouted, "Open up, open up! In the name of Old Blacksails of the Spanish Main, open this door!"

"Hush!" whispered Captain Judd. "Pirates! Don't make a sound!"

Suddenly there was a loud crash, and another. The door shook and the lock broke.

"Run, Java! Hide some place!" ordered Captain Judd. Java ran quickly to the back of the little shop. He looked everywhere for a hiding place. Then he saw the big iron-bound box that his father had left. Java opened it, jumped inside, and pulled the lid down. A tiny crack was left under the edge of the lid. Java peered through this crack at old Captain Judd standing there pale and quiet.

Soon there came another loud crash, and the door fell to the floor of the shop. A gang of shouting men, with drawn swords, came rushing in. Such a terrible gang of cutthroats you never saw. Some had only one eye, with a black patch over the other. Some had no teeth, but each carried in his mouth a long, sharp knife. About their heads they wore tight, red cloths. They wore gold rings in their ears and noses.

In front of this gang of cutthroats stood a huge man wearing a black cocked hat and a long green coat. His long yellow teeth showed when he smiled. This was Old Blacksails, the leader of the pirate gang.

From his hiding place inside the iron-bound box, Java could hear the loud crunch, crunch, crunch of the pirates'



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

boots on the floor of the shop. Then Old Blacksails shouted in a loud, angry voice, "Where is he? Where is he? Tell us where that boy is, or I swear we'll cut your throat!"

Java, sitting on the bottom of the iron-bound box, too frightened to peer out again, heard old Captain Judd say, "I tell you, I never saw him in my life! There is nobody here but me!"

"Har! Har! Har!" laughed the loud voices of the pirate gang. Then Old Blacksails began shouting again. "So you never saw him in your life, did you? So you'll stand there and tell Old Blacksails that, will you? Well, you'll walk the plank for this. Take him along, my hearties, and whatever you like from this place—Spanish wine, Jamaica rum, and Virginia whisky, me hearties. Take it all and burn down the house!"

The next thing that Java knew he was being lifted in the iron-bound box high on the shoulders of the men. They did not take time to look inside. Java lay very quiet, so frightened that he could not make a sound.

They carried him down to the harbor and put him in a boat. In the iron-bound box he rode in the boat across the harbor. Then the men carried him up a ladder to the deck of a ship. Though Java could see nothing from the inside of the box, he knew that he was on the deck of the ship with sails as black as night.

The pirates put the iron-bound box, with Java inside it, upon the deck of the ship. He heard their footsteps going away. Crunch, crunch, crunch, went their heavy boots along the deck. Then everything was quiet.

Java slowly raised the lid of the iron-bound box. Through a tiny crack he peered out upon the deck. No



## *Pirate Gold*

one was to be seen. He could no longer hear the footsteps of the pirates. Far across the harbor Java could see the houses of Batavia, but that was all.

Suddenly, as Java watched the deck through the tiny crack under the lid, he heard the tramp, tramp, tramp of the men walking back. Then along the deck he saw old Captain Judd, very pale, with his eyes blindfolded, marching between two big sailors. The sailors held long swords in their hands and long knives between their teeth. Behind them marched the whole pirate gang, with Old Blacksails in the lead. They all marched with drawn swords, shouting as loud as they could.

"Hang him!" cried one. "Cut him to pieces!" shouted another. "Throw him overboard!" cried others.

"Halt!" shouted Old Blacksails.

Captain Judd stood between the two big sailors. His clothes were torn and his hands were bound behind his back. He faced the sea and the morning sun. Before him lay a long wooden plank. One end of the plank was fastened to the deck of the ship. The other end stretched out high above the sea.

"Now," said Old Blacksails, standing in front of the blindfolded captain, "will you tell us where that boy is? Will you tell us, or will you walk the plank this morning? Speak up! You are about to die!"

"I will not tell you!" said Captain Judd firmly.

"Then overboard you go!" shouted Old Blacksails.  
"Start walking!"

Slowly Captain Judd walked out upon the plank that was fastened on the deck of the pirate ship. It shook beneath his feet. Once, twice, he almost fell into the sea.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

Now he was nearly to the end of the plank. Far below him the green sea went heaving by. He stood blindfolded, high at the end of the plank, in the morning sun.

Old Blacksails stood among the pirate sailors and grinned, showing his long yellow teeth. Suddenly a small boy ran out before him, crying, "Captain Judd! Captain Judd! Stand where you are! Stand where you are!"

"Well, by my bloody hands!" cried Old Blacksails. "It's the boy! Hey, you lubbers, bring the old man back!" The pirate sailors ran forward and led Captain Judd back on the deck.

Old Blacksails took Java by the hand and led him into his cabin. "So, my hearty, here you are! Now tell me where your father buried the gold of the *Lady Anne*."

"I know nothing about any gold," said Java. He stood beside Captain Judd, who had been brought into the cabin by the other pirates. He looked straight at Old Blacksails. "My father's ship, the *Lady Anne*, carried no gold. She carried tea from India, and that was all. Besides, I do not know what happened to the *Lady Anne*. I haven't seen her or my father for two years."

Old Blacksails took Java by the shoulders and shook him hard. "So, my little story-teller," he said, "you won't tell me where the gold is buried? Well, how would you like to walk the plank this morning? How would you like that? Or shall I cut your throat from ear to ear? How would you like that?"

For several moments Java said nothing. He shivered a little as he looked straight at Old Blacksails. Old Blacksails looked at Java. All the pirate gang, standing around him, made no sound.



## *Pirate Gold*

Never in his life before had Java been so frightened, but he knew one thing. Somehow he must save himself and Captain Judd.

"Well?" said Old Blacksails. "Speak up. Where did your father bury the gold of the *Lady Anne*?"

"On the *Lady Anne* my father had no gold," said Java, "but before that he had some. I know because he told me about it."

"Where is it, then?" cried Old Blacksails. "Where is it hidden?"

"In the City of Leaning Walls," said Java; "on a green island in the Yellow Sea. There the gold is buried. I will lead you to it if you will let me steer the ship."

"So be it, my hearty," said Old Blacksails, laughing. "I never heard of such a place in all my travels, but you should know if anyone does. Mind you, no tricks, my dad! If you don't lead me to that treasure, overboard you go, and this old man with you!"

So Old Blacksails let Java steer the ship with sails as black as night. Standing at the ship's wheel, Java forgot his fright. He was almost happy as he stood, with Captain Judd beside him, steering the ship through the green, heaving waves.

Many years before, Java had heard his father tell strange stories about the silent City of Leaning Walls. No one lived in its tall, white, toppling old houses, but it was said that few men who went into this city ever escaped alive. They lost their way in its dark, narrow, winding streets. Then something happened to them, one by one. No one ever saw or heard of them again.

It was said by all the sailors of the Indian Ocean and the



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

Yellow Sea that gold was buried there, but no one ever found it.

Java thought that if he could lead Old Blacksails and his gang of pirates into this terrible city, he and Captain Judd might somehow escape with their lives. There was no other way out.

With Java steering her over the heaving waves, the ship came one evening to a green island in the Yellow Sea. High on the shore of the island stood the City of Leaning Walls.

"There it is! There it is!" cried Old Blacksails. "Lower the boats! Java, lead the way!"

It was nearly dark when the pirates landed on the shore, but they would not wait. Java went ahead with Old Blacksails. The others, with old Captain Judd, came behind them.

Crunch, crunch, crunch, went their boots on the stones of the streets in the silent and terrible city. High over their heads the great white walls of the houses leaned in the night. The men could now hardly see their way. Narrower and narrower became the dark, winding streets.

Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! wailed the wind through the City of Leaning Walls. Strange birds flew over the houses in the night, crying, crying.

At last Java and Old Blacksails and Captain Judd and all the pirate gang stood in the middle of the strange and terrible city. Every minute it seemed that one of these high, leaning walls or a toppling old tower would come tumbling down upon them. The wind went wailing through the windows that were like great black holes in the high, white, leaning walls. Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! wailed the wind.



## *Pirate Gold*

"Now tell us," said Old Blacksails in a low, gruff voice, "where that gold is buried."

"That I cannot tell you," said Java, "but somewhere in this City of Leaning Walls it is buried. That is all I know. You will have to search for it."

"Well and good," said Old Blacksails. "Go, my hearties, and search through every street and every house. If you find where the gold is buried, come back to me here. And remember, you lubbers, no tricks, or by my bloody hands, you'll die for it. Bring old Captain Judd to me here. If the treasure is found, he, too, shall go free. If the treasure is not found, both he and the boy shall die."

"Aye, aye, sir!" said the pirate gang, and away they went. Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch, went their boots on the stones of the streets. Soon they were out of sight in the dark, winding streets of the city. Only Java and Captain Judd and Old Blacksails stood together in the middle of the City of Leaning Walls.

Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! wailed the wind. High above them the toppling old walls leaned and sagged in the night. Some had windows that were long and narrow and crooked, like cracks blown open by the wind. High up on some of the old walls there were doorways with no stairs leading up to them, and on others there were crooked, winding stairs leading up to nowhere at all. It was a strange place.

"Remember now," Old Blacksails said to Java and Captain Judd, "no tricks!" He drew his sword and held it in his hand. He grinned, showing his long yellow teeth and looking very fierce.

"You'd better watch your pirate gang," said Java, "or they will be the ones to play tricks on you!"



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

For a long time Java, Captain Judd, and Old Blacksails waited there in the middle of the City of Leaning Walls. All around them there was not a sound but the wailing of the wind. The pirate gang who went to search for the buried treasure did not come back. Java shivered as he stood there between Old Blacksails and Captain Judd.

Suddenly Old Blacksails struck the ground with his sword. He began shouting in a loud and angry voice, "Hi-ho! Hi-ho! Come back, you lubbers! Come back here to me! Hi-ho! Hi-ho! Hi-ho!"

Not a voice answered from the dark, narrow winding streets. Not a sound came from the high white walls of the houses that leaned in the night. Only the wind went Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! Woo-oo-ooo! The pirate gang did not answer. Not one of them came back.

Old Blacksails turned fiercely to Java and old Captain Judd. "You have lied to me!" he shouted. "You have lied to me! There is no gold buried here!"

"Oh, yes, there is," said Java quickly, "but your gang of pirates have probably found it and run away with it. That is why they do not come back. That is why they do not answer you. I warned you to watch them!"

"Well, by my bloody hands," cried Old Blacksails, "if that's what they've done, I'll kill them all! Which way did they go? Show me which way they went! When I find them not one will be left alive!"

"That way! That way!" cried Java, pointing down a dark, winding street.

"That way! That way!" cried old Captain Judd, pointing past the high white walls of the houses that leaned in the night.

With his sword in his hand Old Blacksails ran down the



## *Pirate Gold*

dark street. Soon he was out of sight. Java and old Captain Judd were left alone in the middle of the City of Leaning Walls.

"Quick! Quick!" cried old Captain Judd. "We must escape while we have a chance. Run to the ship, Java. Run as fast as you can!"

Java and Captain Judd started to run through the dark, winding streets. They had not gone very far when suddenly Java stopped.

"What is it, Java?" cried Captain Judd.

"Look!" cried Java, shivering with fear. "It is too late! We cannot escape now! The whole pirate gang is coming back!"

From all the narrow streets came the pirates. With drawn swords they came running between the high, white, leaning houses.

"You have lied to us! You have lied to us!" they cried to Captain Judd and Java. "There's no gold buried here! We have searched the whole city through and found nothing. You have lied to us!"

"Oh, no!" said Java. "I have not lied to you. But while you were searching for the gold, Old Blacksails went to look for it himself. If you don't catch him before he finds it, you'll probably get none at all for yourselves!"

"So he did, did he?" cried the pirate gang. "We might have known he'd play us a trick like this! Which way did he go? Which way did he go?"

"That way!" cried Java, pointing down a dark, narrow, winding street.

"That way," cried old Captain Judd, pointing past the high, old leaning houses.

With drawn swords, the whole pirate gang dashed



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

away through the dark, narrow, winding streets. Soon they were out of sight. But such a shouting as never was heard rang through all the City of Leaning Walls. Loud cries and angry voices came from every high, white, sagging wall and from all the old, empty houses. Strange birds flew overhead, crying, crying.

"Come, Captain Judd!" cried Java. "Run as fast as you can!"

Away they ran, out of the City of Leaning Walls. They reached the boat and rowed over the sea to the ship with sails as black as night. At last they stood safe upon the deck of the pirate ship.

In the darkness, the wind blew out of the City of Leaning Walls. It filled the black sails of the pirate ship. She began to move through the heaving waves. Java and Captain Judd stood at the wheel and steered her past the green island and out across the sea.

"I'll call you Captain Java after this," said old Captain Judd, and he laughed. He laid his hand on Java's shoulder. "Wait until old Batavia hears of this. Everyone there will call you Captain Java, too!"

"Wait until old Batavia sees us come sailing home in this ship with sails as black as night," said Java, laughing too. "Then probably everyone will call me Blacksails of the Spanish Main!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" said old Captain Judd.



# Augustus, Pirate

By LEGRAND



THE SPRY little old man who came in had snapping black eyes, white hair, and a crinkly white beard that extended down past his throat and onto his chest. His skin was brown from long exposure to the blazing sun, and his face was covered with wrinkles like dried, cracked mud.

He spoke English with a strong French accent, getting his z's and th's all mixed up. Sometimes his words got strangely twisted around. He grinned at Augustus and said pleasantly, "Ah, you are pleased to know me!"

The old man's face glowed when Albert told him that Augustus wanted to hear about pirates. It was easy to see that pirates were his favorite subject. He lighted a big black pipe stuffed to overflowing with a peculiarly strong tobacco. Soon a thick blue cloud of bitter-smelling smoke rose around the old man's head. It almost hid him as he raised both arms in a gesture that took in the whole surrounding countryside and said, "Did you know that the families of those old pirates still live here—right on this bayou?"



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

Augustus looked around with a startled expression as if he expected to see all the pirate families waving bloody cutlasses behind him.

"Oh, they look just like everyone else now," chuckled *Grandpère Gaspard*. "But their great-grandfathers were pirates just the same. And some of them I would not trust even now."

"But what did the pirates do here?" asked Augustus. "I thought pirates were always on ships, in the ocean."

"They were, but they came here too. But maybe we should begin at the beginning—"

Augustus and Albert were still wet from their ducking, but being wet was not a very serious or very important matter to them. Sitting on the warm grass just outside the door, they stretched their legs to the heat of the sun and waited for old Mr. Gaspard to go on.

As Albert's grandfather told the story of the pirates of Barataria, his gestures grew more and more excited. His arms flew and his fingers snapped. Sometimes he even stamped his feet.

He told the story of Jean and Pierre Lafitte, the pirate chiefs, so vividly that in their minds Augustus and Albert saw themselves at the pirate headquarters on the Grand Isle in Barataria Bay where Bayou Barataria empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

"Yes," went on Mr. Gaspard, "I have it from my own *grandpère* who saw the place. In the year 1812, there were more than a thousand men in Jean Lafitte's pirate city on Grand Isle."

Augustus and Albert saw the pirate city and its thousand men; and every desperate pirate in the place saluted



## *Augustus, Pirate*

as they strutted along the docks, picking their way between great piles of Spanish gold, chests of jewels, and heaps of costly, if somewhat bloodstained, silks.

As they heard about the rakish, black-hulled pirate ships that came in laden with treasure or went surging out with the tide in search of loot, Augustus dreamed that he was the captain of every ship, while Albert in his own dreams commanded each one.

When Mr. Gaspard went on to tell about the battles at sea, when the pirate ships swooped down upon some richly laden merchant vessel, the old man's arms flailed wildly as if he held a shining cutlass in each clenched fist.

Sometimes those fists whizzed past dangerously close to Augustus' nose. But that only made the story seem more real and, as he dodged the flying fists, in Augustus' mind the first to board the doomed ship was always Augustus. And in the swordplay that followed, as the decks ran red, no blade flashed so brightly or so desperately as Augustus'.

Finally, when the battle and the looting were over and the black-hulled pirate ship sailed triumphantly back to Grand Isle, it was Augustus in Augustus' dream and Albert in Albert's who stood in the bow and smilingly received the thunderous roars of welcome from the assembled pirates.

Then the great warehouses on Grand Isle bulged with treasure: gold from Spanish treasure ships, black slaves from African slave ships, silks and costly things of all kinds from the heavily laden merchant ships of all the seven seas.

Some of the loot like the gold and jewels could be used as money, but the slaves and other merchandise had to be



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

sold. And in the city of New Orleans were men who would buy such things. It was too risky for the pirates to take their treasure to the city in the usual way, up the Mississippi River, where warships might have captured them. But the hidden mazes of the bayous offered a safe and secret back entrance to the city. So in fleets of pirogues and small boats the pirates—led, of course, by Augustus and Albert—stole through the dark forests, traveling silently and at night.

“And they came up this bayou right here,” said old Mr. Gaspard, pointing dramatically with both hands at the gleaming ribbon of water that wound past the village and on through the dim mystery of the great woods beyond.

“Ah, those were the happy days for pirates!” sighed *Grandpère Gaspard*.

But then came the day when the warships suddenly appeared in Barataria Bay and defeated the pirate crews.

Then Augustus saw himself rallying a small force. Loading the treasure into pirogues, they fled up the winding waterways where the men-of-war could not follow. In the dead of night they buried the treasure deep in the forests.

“And it is still there,” said old Mr. Gaspard excitedly. “All you have to do is find it!”

“But I don’t remember where I buried it!” said Augustus and then looked a little sheepish as he realized what he had said.

Mr. Gaspard, who was never very sure of his English, thought that Augustus had probably asked him where to look for treasure.

“Oh, *that* no one knows,” he said. “All I can tell you



## *Augustus, Pirate*

is that the pirates always buried it under piles of shells—because shells will not wash away in floods."

"Shells?" asked Augustus. "Where did they get the shells?"

Mr. Gaspard shrugged. "Some say they brought them here from the Gulf, and some say the Indians who lived here a long time ago left big piles of shells where their villages were."

"Shells, eh?" said Augustus, looking hard at Albert. "Well, I guess we'd better go. Maybe Ma wants me to do something."

"Ho!" snorted old Mr. Gaspard. "I suppose maybe your mother wants you to go looking for piles of shells out in the swamps—no?"

He stood on the bank chuckling as Augustus and Albert got into the pirogue and paddled off.

Then, shaking his head, old Mr. Gaspard stumped off to his house, muttering, "Me—I wish I was young enough to go too."

\*       \*       \*

(Augustus and Albert headed out after buried treasure. Night caught them in the big swamp, and they camped in a hollow tree trunk. Augustus saw a white shape glowing in the darkness and went to investigate.)

\*       \*       \*

Augustus crept cautiously ahead. He reached the edge of the woods. The white shape was just ahead of him. Beside him he could feel Albert. Albert still had the shovel; he reached out and poked at the white thing. Small pieces of white fell from the rest and rolled away.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"Aw," said Augustus, "it's only some ol' white rocks with the moon shining on them."

Albert reached down and picked something up. He held it up to the light of the moon and gasped.

"Augustus," he said excitedly, "it's a shell—that thing is a big shell pile—the kind *Grandpère* says the treasures are buried in!"

"Yay," shouted Augustus. "I knew. I knew it—I knew it all the time!"

He grabbed the shovel and started to dig furiously. The shells were hard to dig away and Augustus made little progress in the dark. He tripped over the handle of the shovel and sat down hard. Albert said, "Let's wait until morning. We couldn't see what we found even if we found it. And besides we'd probably miss it in the dark, anyway."

Augustus was impatient to go on, but after trying to dig again, he realized it was hopeless.

"All right," he said. "Let's make a big fire and sit up the rest of the night. We'll watch so no one else can come along and get the treasure."

They dragged a huge load of wood back to the hollow tree and built the fire up into a blaze so big it lighted up the whole end of the island.

Too excited now to be scared, Augustus and Albert lay in the hollow tree and waited impatiently for morning.

"Now remember—no sleeping," said Augustus. "It'd be a fine thing, wouldn't it, if somebody came along and dug up our treasure after we almost found it—and us asleep!"

Although Albert agreed not to sleep, he tried reasonably to point out that people didn't usually roam around in the swamps at night.



## *Augustus, Pirate*

"Who'd be likely to come digging around here on a dark night like this?" he asked.

"Well, finding treasure is a mighty funny thing," said Augustus. "You can't ever tell what might happen."

It was snug and comfortable in the tree trunk. The sides reflected the cheerful orange glow of the firelight.

Through the opening in the palmetto screen the pleasantly pungent odor of wood smoke mingled with the fresh damp earthy smell of the woods at night.

Morning seemed a long time coming.

"Remember—no sleeping," said Augustus.

Albert didn't answer. Augustus looked at him. Albert was asleep.

"Oh, well," thought Augustus, "I'll let him sleep a while."

The sound of the frogs was soothing and monotonous, like the drip of rain on a roof, Augustus thought. He remembered how pleasant it was to be half-asleep in the houseboat while the rain dripped steadily.

The firelight wavered as the fire burned lower. The flames died, leaving a bed of glowing coals. Gradually the glow of the coals dimmed. Pale moonlight flooded the open space in front of the tree trunk, replacing the warm fire glow. Occasionally there was a thin faint splashing as a fish jumped out of water. The last of the glowing coals winked out. Augustus did not build up the fire. Augustus was asleep.

The deep calm of the woods lay undisturbed over the moon-silvered swamp.

The sky was red and gold with the glow of a bright sunrise when the squall of a blue jay woke Albert. He rubbed his eyes, looked around, then jumped up.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

“Hey, wake up,” he shouted, and while Augustus yawned and blinked at him, Albert picked up the shovel and ran toward the pile of shells.

Augustus followed him and they took turns digging. It was hard work. The shells overlapped so that the shovel didn’t go very far into the pile no matter how hard they pushed. There was a place near the center of the pile where the shells were sunk in a hollow and Augustus said that showed where the treasure was buried. Using the shovel like a scoop, they dragged shells down the side of the pile, gradually getting farther into the hollow place.

After they had dug for what seemed like a long time without finding anything, Albert stopped to rest and stare gloomily at the shell pile.

“You know,” he said, “not all these shell piles have treasure in them.”

Even Augustus looked discouraged, but he gritted his teeth and said, “No, I guess not, but if there’s any treasure in this one I’ll find it if I have to dig clear to China. Gimme that shovel! We’ll see.”

They went on digging, taking turns with the shovel as the sun rose higher and drops of sweat glistened on their foreheads.

“Uh!” said Albert suddenly as his shovel hit something that was not shells.

He dug again and this time Augustus heard the muffled scraping sound that was altogether different from the sharp clatter of the shells.

“What is it?” whispered Augustus.

“Don’t know,” whispered Albert. “It doesn’t feel like a wooden chest though.”



## *Augustus, Pirate*

Augustus ran to help and pulled at the shells with his hands while Albert dug with the shovel. "It feels like cloth," said Albert wonderingly as he scraped the shovel around in the hole.

"Huh," said Augustus, "it can't be. Who ever heard of pirates burying treasure in cloth?"

He stretched his arm down into the hole and felt around with his hand.

"It *is* cloth," he muttered as his fingers scraped over something soft but scratchy.

They dug harder than ever, and the sound of the shells rolling down the side of the pile was like the clink of gold pieces.

"Guess we can get it now," said Albert, reaching down in the hole. Augustus got into the hole and pushed.

"All together now when I count three," he said. He braced himself and counted, "One, Two, *Three*—uh!"

"It's coming," gasped Albert. "Keep pushing."

"Here it comes," grunted Augustus, as the shells fell away and up came a big canvas bag.

With their eyes wide with excitement Albert and Augustus stood for a moment looking down at the bag.

"Why," said Albert. "Why, look—it's a mailbag."

Augustus just gaped at the bag, reading the words U.S. MAIL that were printed across it.

"But it's a new mailbag," said Augustus. "How could the pirates have buried it?"

Albert stood looking at the mailbag and scratching his ear as he always did when he was puzzled.

"The pirates didn't do it," he said finally. "Anyway, not those old pirates." He looked all around, staring anxiously



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

into the dim shadows in the woods. "Augustus," he whispered, "this must be one of Mr. Thibodaux's mailbags and I bet he's been robbed!"

Augustus had been fumbling at the mailbag and now he succeeded in opening it. There were no letters in it, but down in the bottom Augustus felt some square packages wrapped in paper. He dumped them out and tore away the paper coverings.

"Look!" he gasped. "Money!"

Albert's mouth popped open and he whistled shrilly through his teeth. The package was full of paper money.

"We'd better get out of here quick," whispered Augustus.

\* \* \*

When Augustus and Albert had loaded the mailbag containing the money into the pirogue, they pushed off and paddled hurriedly away from the island.

"My," said Albert, looking back anxiously, "I'm glad we're out of there."

Augustus only grunted but he was paddling faster than Albert had ever seen him paddle before.

They had reached the head of the lake where it narrowed and split into small winding waterways when Augustus whispered, "Say, if those pirates should see us, they'd spot that mailbag right away."

"That's right," answered Albert. "What'll we do?"

"Well, we'll have to hide it somehow."

"Maybe we could cover it with palmetto leaves," suggested Albert. "Then it would look as if we just had some fish. Lots of people cover fish with leaves so the sun won't dry them."



## *Augustus, Pirate*

"Well, I guess we're safe now," said Augustus after they had covered the bag. "Even if the pirates saw us, they wouldn't know we had the money."

"Yes, I guess so," said Albert, "but maybe we'd better hurry up, anyway. Probably everyone in Evangeline is out hunting for us by now."

As they paddled on, they both looked glum for a while, thinking of home and how they had worried their families.

"I betcha they'll be glad though when they know what we did," said Augustus, brightening.

That started a pleasant line of thought and Augustus felt a warm glow creep all through him. He planned how he would come into the houseboat, just as if nothing much had happened.

He grinned as he thought of how Ma would shout, "Where have you been?" And then he would say, very carelessly, "Oh, I just went out in the swamp to get some stolen money." Finally he would open the mailbag and say, "Here it is. We had a little trouble getting it, but we did it."

He was still feeling pleased with the idea of that scene when Albert said, "Probably we'll meet the men out looking for us before long."

Augustus scowled. It would spoil everything, he thought, to be found like that. Why, it would be just as if they needed rescuing and not at all like the triumphant return he had been planning.

"Aw," he said, "how would they know we came this way?"

"I expect they'll look everywhere."



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

Augustus looked gloomily ahead.

"Yeh," he grumbled, "I suppose maybe that's right."

"Look," broke in Albert, pointing. "There's someone now."

Augustus looked in the direction in which Albert pointed and saw two men in a boat. The boat was nosed into the bank of an island. The men stared when they saw the boys. Then they jumped up and shouted and waved. "Aw," said Augustus disgustedly. Albert turned the pirogue and they paddled toward the boat.

One of the men was tall and angular with big heavy features. The other was shorter and had a bristly red beard.

"Hmmm," said Albert as they drew close. "Wonder who they are. I never saw them in Evangeline."

"Oh, I suppose Pop has got everyone in Louisiana out looking for us by now," said Augustus.

Albert narrowed his eyes in a puzzled frown. There was something familiar about the boat the men were in, but even so he couldn't recognize them.

As they drew nearer the tall man waded out into the shallow water and caught the bow of the pirogue, drawing it alongside the other boat. It was a motorboat.

Suddenly Albert caught his breath sharply. He remembered now where he had seen that motorboat!

"Well, here we are," said Augustus.

The men seemed surprised at that. They were spattered with mud and looked tired, as if they had come through the swamp a long way. Augustus felt guilty that he and Albert had caused them so much trouble.

"I'm sorry you had to come way out here looking for us," he blurted..



## *Augustus, Pirate*

The men looked puzzled.

"We—uh—ran out of gas," said one. "We want you to give us a lift in your pirogue."

"Oh," said Augustus, "then you weren't looking for us?"

"No," said the tall man, grinning at the other, "we weren't looking for you. We weren't looking for anyone."

He had a harsh grating voice and even when he grinned his eyes were cold and hard. He turned to the other man and muttered something in a low voice.

Augustus heard a few words: "No—take them with us—can't tell which way we went."

Augustus found himself thinking that the cold-eyed man's name should be "Fishface" when he felt Albert nudge his side.

Half-turning he saw a strange expression in Albert's eyes. Albert leaned forward and whispered without moving his lips, "Augustus—that's Mr. Thibodaux's boat!"

Augustus gasped.

"Well, come on," grated the harsh voice. "Let's get going. We're in a hurry."

"Okay, Fishfa—I mean all right, mister," stammered Augustus confusedly.

"Where do you want to go?" asked Albert uncertainly.

"Oh, just out of the swamp," said the man. "We'll paddle," he went on. "You kids sit down in the middle."

Augustus and Albert looked at each other uncertainly. Then they remembered the mailbag under the pile of palmettos. They hastily moved to the middle of the boat and sat on the bulge in the leaves that showed where the mailbag was hidden.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"We—we want to go to Evangeline," said Augustus.

There was no answer as the men took their places in the bow and stern of the boat and shoved off. For some time they paddled silently.

Augustus and Albert exchanged glances as they noticed how carefully the men peered around before crossing an open space.

The boys stared anxiously ahead too. And now Augustus would have been very glad to see the searching party he hadn't wanted to see before.

Suddenly Albert looked around and said, "Say, you're not going toward Evangeline—you're going away from it!"

Fishface scowled. "Keep quiet," he said. "We're just playing a joke on some friends of ours. We don't want to meet them."

"Oh," stammered Augustus. But leaning forward he whispered to Albert, "If you see anyone—holler."

Albert nodded, and they both looked anxiously back toward the village as the boat moved off in the other direction.

The gurgle of water against the sides of the pirogue sounded unnaturally loud and a breeze that rustled the branches of the trees made a low, dismal sound. Albert had been hearing that sound all his life but never before had he thought of it as dismal. All the familiar noises of the swamp seemed to have a new meaning. The swish of the water seemed to be whispering, "You can't get away—you can't get away."

Turtles splashed into the water all around. One splash was louder than the rest. Augustus wondered if it was an alligator. He was surprised to find himself thinking about



## *Augustus, Pirate*

alligators at a time like this. The louder splash came again. Augustus turned to look in the direction from which the sound came.

Albert saw him suddenly stiffen and stare. He leaned forward and stared in the same direction.

Far back in the swamp something that looked like a pirogue was moving out into an open space. He saw the sunlight flash on a paddle. It *was* a pirogue and behind it came another and another and another. Four in all glided into the opening, followed by a skiff.

Then a muffled hail sounded faintly, "Augustus—Albert."

Augustus took a deep breath and suddenly yelled, "Pop," so loud that the echoes rang like a bell.

The two pirates noticed the boats, and Augustus felt the pirogue leap ahead under him.

A shout told that the men from the village had seen the boys. Then came a splashing as they set out in pursuit.

For a time the boats stayed about the same distance apart. Then gradually Augustus realized that the bandits were gaining. The pirogue shook and quivered with the force of the powerful paddle strokes that sent the light boat leaping through the still water.

Augustus realized that if the bandits could get out of sight in the dark winding waterways of the swamp, they could easily get away.

There was a quick surge of water and the pirogue rocked as it made a turn. The turn had been so sudden that the little boat almost tipped over. For a moment Augustus hoped it would. Then it righted itself and leaped ahead again out of sight of the pursuers.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"They'll never get us now," growled Fishface.

But Augustus had an idea. His eyes gleamed as he remembered his first experience with a pirogue. Strangely he even remembered the way Albert had looked that day when he said, "They say that once a man shifted a chew of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other—and his pirogue turned over."

Thoughts crowded into Augustus' mind. He remembered how quickly this very pirogue had turned over the first time he tried to paddle it—the day he and Albert first went to see *Grandpère* Gaspard. Since then Augustus had grown so accustomed to balancing himself in the tipsy little boat that he did it naturally and without thinking.

Augustus' eyes narrowed and glowed with excitement as he considered his plan. Behind him he could hear the splashing of the paddles of the pursuing boats. They were not far off and if he could stop the pirates—even for a moment—Pop and the others could catch up.

He darted a quick glance at the pirates. They were giving all their attention to steering the speeding boat through the narrow tricky waterways and around the sharp bends.

Cautiously Augustus shifted his position. Slowly sliding his feet under him, he crouched and felt the muscles in his legs quiver as he gathered all his strength for a sudden lunge. As he looked ahead he saw a sharp bend. He waited, twisting half around so that his hands rested on the side of the boat. The bow of the pirogue reached the bend. There was a sudden lurch and the boat rocked and skidded sideways as it swung around the curve.

"Now," thought Augustus. When the pirogue was in the middle of the turn, he braced himself and sprang, throwing all his weight against the side of the boat.





With a sudden lurch the pirogue rolled completely over



## *Augustus, Pirate*

"Hey, sit down," shouted the pirate in the stern and leaned forward to push Augustus back.

But it was too late. The pirogue heeled over and water poured in as the side dipped under. With a sudden staggering lurch the pirogue rolled completely over.

Augustus hit the water first. He heard the loud splash as the others followed him and sank spluttering beneath the surface.

Augustus swam under water until his outstretched hands grasped a tree trunk. He let himself rise to the surface, hid behind the tree and looked back. The two men were floundering in the water trying to right the boat.

Augustus saw Albert behind a tree close by. Then he opened his mouth and shouted, "Pop!"

There was an answering shout followed by the quick splashing of paddles. A pirogue shot into sight, followed quickly by three more, and then by Pop's skiff. Augustus saw the two men in the water leave their overturned boat and swim toward a dense growth of high swamp grass and palmettos.

At the same time he saw that Pop and the other men from the village were searching the water near them shouting, "Augustus—Albert!"

"Hey," shouted Augustus, swimming into sight. "We're all right. Get those men. They're pirates!"

Excitedly pointing toward the escaping men, he forgot to swim and his head bobbed below the water. When he rose to the surface, puffing and blowing to clear the water out of his nose, he felt himself being lifted. Then he was panting on the floor of Pop's skiff. Albert was beside him. Pop was pounding them both on the back.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"Are you all right? Are you all right?" asked Pop anxiously.

"'Course I'm all right," said Augustus. "Why wouldn't I be all right?" Then he went on excitedly, "Don't let Fishface get away!"

"Fishface?" asked Pop. "What is Fishface?"

"It's all right," broke in Albert. "They've got them."

Then Augustus saw that the other pirogues had overtaken the bandits and were now bringing them back.

"Well," said Augustus weakly, "well—I guess we showed 'em!"

Then he heard Mr. Thibodaux, the mailman, shouting, "Yes, these are the men, but where is the money?"

"Huh," sneered Fishface. "What money?"

Augustus and Albert looked toward the overturned pirogue and grinned at what they saw.

"There it is. There's the money," they shouted together, pointing to the mailbag floating half-hidden by the palmetto fronds which had covered it in the boat.

The pirates stared unbelievingly as the dripping mailbag was hauled out of the water.

"How—how did *that* get here?" gasped Fishface.

"Oh, it was right there in the pirogue all the time—right under your nose!" said Augustus.

"But—but it does not understand me!" sputtered *Grand-père Gaspard*.

"Well, it's easy," said Augustus. "We just went out and dug up the money and then we met these men. So we caught them, that's all."

Then, seeing Pop grin at him with a peculiar expression, he hastily added, "Oh, I guess you men helped us some!"



### *Augustus, Pirate*

*Grandpère* Gaspard shook his head dazedly muttering, "First sunbonnets on hogs they put—and now bandits with money they catch. Me—I think enough is too much!"

"Maybe you'd better tell us just what happened," said Pop.

Augustus and Albert told about everything they had done, and a few little things they hadn't done—at least not in quite the way they told about them.

When the story was told, *Grandpère* Gaspard turned to Pop and said, "Please, maybe you take them home now before they catch some more pirates—that would be too many pirates, I think."





# Tom Chist and the Treasure Box

By HOWARD PYLE

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To TELL about Tom Chist, and how he got his name and how he came to be living at the little settlement of Henlopen, just inside the mouth of the Delaware Bay, the story must begin as far back as 1686, when a great storm swept the Atlantic coast from end to end. During the heaviest part of the hurricane a bark went ashore on the Hen-and-Chicken Shoals, just below Cape Henlopen and at the mouth of the Delaware Bay, and Tom Chist was the only soul of all those on board the ill-fated vessel who escaped alive.

This story must first be told, because it was on account of the strange and miraculous escape that happened to him at that time that he gained the name that was given to him.

Even as late as that time of the American colonies, the little scattered settlement at Henlopen, made up of English, with a few Dutch and Swedish people, was still only a spot upon the face of the great American wilderness that



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spread away, with swamp and forest, no man knew how far to the westward. That wilderness was not only full of wild beasts, but of Indian savages, who every fall would come in wandering tribes to spend the winter along the shores of the fresh-water lakes below Henlopen. There for four or five months they would live upon fish and clams and wild ducks and geese, chipping their arrow-heads, and making their earthenware pots and pans under the lee of the sand hills and pine woods below the Capes.

Sometimes on Sundays when the Rev. Hilary Jones would be preaching in the little log church back in the woods, these half-clad red savages would come in from the cold, and sit squatting in the back part of the church, listening stolidly to the words that had no meaning for them.

But about the wreck of the bark in 1686. Such a wreck as that which then went ashore on the Hen-and-Chicken Shoals was a godsend to the poor and needy settlers in the wilderness where so few good things ever came. For the vessel went to pieces during the night, and the next morning the beach was strewn with wreckage—boxes and barrels, chests and spars, timbers and planks, a plentiful and bountiful harvest to be gathered up by the settlers as they chose, with no one to forbid or prevent them.

The name of the bark, as found painted on some of the water barrels and sea chests, was the *Bristol Merchant*, and she no doubt hailed from England.

As was said, the only soul who escaped alive off the wreck was Tom Chist.

A settler, a fisherman named Matt Abrahamson, and his daughter Molly, found Tom. He was washed up on the beach among the wreckage, in a great wooden box which



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had been securely tied around with a rope and lashed between two spars—apparently for better protection in beating through the surf. Matt Abrahamson thought he had found something of more than usual value when he came upon this chest; but when he cut the cords and broke open the box with his broadax, he could not have been more astonished had he beheld a salamander instead of a baby of nine or ten months old lying half smothered in the blankets that covered the bottom of the chest.

Matt Abrahamson's daughter Molly had had a baby who had died a month or so before. So when she saw the little one lying there in the bottom of the chest, she cried out in great loud voice that the Good Man had sent her another baby in place of her own.

The rain was driving before the hurricane storm in dim, slanting sheets, and so she wrapped up the baby in the man's coat she wore and ran off home without waiting to gather up any more of the wreckage.

It was Parson Jones who gave the foundling his name. When the news came to his ears of what Matt Abrahamson had found he went over to the fisherman's cabin to see the child. He examined the clothes in which the baby was dressed. They were of fine linen and handsomely stitched, and the reverend gentleman opined that the foundling's parents must have been of quality. A kerchief had been wrapped around the baby's neck and under its arms and tied behind, and in the corner, marked with very fine needlework, were the initials T.C.

"What d'ye call him, Molly?" said Parson Jones. He was standing, as he spoke, with his back to the fire, warming his palms before the blaze. The pocket of the great-



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coat he wore bulged out with a big case bottle of spirits which he had gathered up out of the wreck that afternoon.  
“What d’ye call him, Molly?”

“I’ll call him Tom, after my own baby.”

“That goes very well with the initial on the kerchief,” said Parson Jones. “But what other name d’ye give him? Let it be something to go with the C.”

“I don’t know,” said Molly.

“Why not call him ‘Chist,’ since he was born in a chist out of the sea? ‘Tom Chist’—the name goes off like a flash in the pan.” And so “Tom Chist” he was called and “Tom Chist” he was christened.

So much for the beginning of the history of Tom Chist. The story of Captain Kidd’s treasure box does not begin until the late spring of 1699.

That was the year that the famous pirate captain, coming up from the West Indies, sailed his sloop into the Delaware Bay, where he lay for over a month waiting for news from his friends in New York.

For he had sent word to that town asking if the coast was clear for him to return home with the rich prize he had brought from the Indian seas and the coast of Africa, and meantime he lay there in the Delaware Bay waiting for a reply. Before he left he turned the whole of Tom Chist’s life topsy-turvy with something that he brought ashore.

By that time Tom Chist had grown into a strong-limbed, thick-jointed boy of fourteen or fifteen years of age. It was a miserable dog’s life he lived with old Matt Abrahamsen, for the old fisherman was in his cups more than half the time, and when he was so there was hardly a day



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passed that he did not give Tom a curse or a buffet, or, as like as not, an actual beating. One would have thought that such treatment would have broken the spirit of the poor little foundling, but it had just the opposite effect upon Tom Chist, who was one of your stubborn, sturdy, stiff-willed fellows who only grow harder and more tough the more they are ill-treated. It had been a long time now since he had made any outcry or complaint at the hard usage he suffered from old Matt. At such times he would shut his teeth and bear whatever came to him, until sometimes the half-drunken old man would be driven almost mad by his stubborn silence. Maybe he would stop in the midst of the beating he was administering, and, grinding his teeth, would cry out: "Won't ye say naught? Won't ye say naught? Well, then, I'll see if I can't make ye say naught." When things had reached such a pass as this Molly would generally interfere to protect her foster son, and then she and Tom would together fight the old man until they had wrenched the stick or the strap out of his hand. Then old Matt would chase them out of doors and around and around the house for maybe half an hour, until his anger was cool, when he would go back again, and for a time the storm would be over.

Besides his foster mother, Tom Chist had a very good friend in Parson Jones, who used to come over every now and then to Abrahamson's hut upon the chance of getting a half dozen fish for breakfast. He always had a kind word or two for Tom, who during the winter evenings would go over to the good man's house to learn his letters, and to read and write and cipher a little, so that by now he was able to spell the words out of the Bible and the alma-



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nac, and knew enough to change tuppence into four ha'pennies.

This is the sort of boy Tom Chist was, and this is the sort of life he led.

In the late spring or early summer of 1699 Captain Kidd's sloop sailed into the mouth of the Delaware Bay and changed the whole fortune of his life.

And this is how you come to the story of Captain Kidd's treasure box.

### II

Old Matt Abrahamson kept the flat-bottomed boat in which he went fishing some distance down the shore, and in the neighborhood of the old wreck that had been sunk on the Shoals. This was the usual fishing ground of the settlers, and here old Matt's boat generally lay drawn up on the sand.

There had been a thunderstorm that afternoon, and Tom had gone down the beach to bale out the boat in readiness for the morning's fishing.

It was full moonlight now, as he was returning, and the night sky was full of floating clouds. Now and then there was a dull flash to the westward, and once a muttering growl of thunder, promising another storm to come.

All that day the pirate sloop had been lying just off the shore back of the Capes, and now Tom Chist could see the sails glimmering pallidly in the moonlight, spread for drying after the storm. He was walking up the shore homeward when he became aware that at some distance ahead of him there was a ship's boat drawn up on the little narrow beach, and a group of men clustered about it. He hurried forward with a good deal of curiosity to see who



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had landed, but it was not until he had come close to them that he could distinguish who and what they were. Then he knew that it must be a party who had come off the pirate sloop. They had evidently just landed, and two men were lifting out a chest from the boat. One of them was a negro, naked to the waist, and the other was a white man in his shirt sleeves, wearing petticoat breeches, a Monterey cap upon his head, a red bandana handkerchief around his neck, and gold earrings in his ears. He had a long, plaited queue hanging down his back, and a great sheath knife dangling from his side. Another man, evidently the captain of the party, stood at a little distance as they lifted the chest out of the boat. He had a cane in one hand and a lighted lantern in the other, although the moon was shining as bright as day. He wore jack boots and a handsome laced coat, and he had a long, drooping mustache that curled down below his chin. He wore a fine, feathered hat, and his long black hair hung down upon his shoulders.

All this Tom Chist could see in the moonlight that glinted and twinkled upon the gilt buttons of his coat.

They were so busy lifting the chest from the boat that at first they did not observe that Tom Chist had come up and was standing there. It was the white man with the long, plaited queue and the gold earrings that spoke to him. "Boy, what do you want here, boy?" he said, in a rough, hoarse voice. "Where d'ye come from?" And then dropping his end of the chest, and without giving Tom time to answer, he pointed off down the beach, and said, "You'd better be going about your own business, if you know what's good for you; and don't you come back, or you'll find what you don't want waiting for you."

Tom saw in a glance that the pirates were all looking



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at him, and then, without saying a word, he turned and walked away. The man who had spoken to him followed him threateningly for some little distance, as though to see that he had gone away as he was bidden to do. But presently he stopped, and Tom hurried on alone, until the boat and the crew and all were dropped away behind and lost in the moonlight night. Then he himself stopped also, turned, and looked back whence he had come.

There had been something very strange in the appearance of the men he had just seen, something very mysterious in their actions, and he wondered what it all meant, and what they were going to do. He stood for a little while thus looking and listening. He could see nothing, and could hear only the sound of distant talking. What were they doing on the lonely shore thus at night? Then, following a sudden impulse, he turned and cut off across the sand hummocks, skirting around inland, but keeping pretty close to the shore, his object being to spy upon them, and to watch what they were about from the back of the low sand hills that fronted the beach.

He had gone along some distance in his circuitous return when he became aware of the sound of voices that seemed to be drawing closer to him as he came toward the speakers. He stopped and stood listening, and instantly, as he stopped, the voices stopped also. He crouched there silently in the bright, glimmering moonlight, surrounded by the silent stretches of sand, and the stillness seemed to press upon him like a heavy hand. Then suddenly the sound of a man's voice began again, and as Tom listened he could hear some one slowly counting. "Ninety-one," the voice began, "ninety-two, ninety-three, ninety-four,



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ninety-five, ninety-six; ninety-seven, ninety-eight, ninety-nine, one hundred, one hundred and one”—the slow, monotonous count coming nearer and nearer—“one hundred and two, one hundred and three, one hundred and four,” and so on in its monotonous reckoning.

Suddenly he saw three heads appear above the sand hill, so close to him that he crouched down quickly with a keen thrill, close beside the hummock near which he stood. His first fear was that they might have seen him in the moonlight; but they had not, and his heart rose again as the counting voice went steadily on. “One hundred and twenty,” it was saying—“and twenty-one, and twenty-two, and twenty-three, and twenty-four,” and then he who was counting came out from behind the little sandy rise into the white and open level of shimmering brightness.

It was the man with the cane whom Tom had seen some time before—the captain of the party who had landed. He carried his cane under his arm now, and was holding his lantern close to something that he held in his hand, and upon which he looked narrowly as he walked with a slow and measured tread in a perfectly straight line across the sand, counting each step as he took it. “And twenty-five, and twenty-six, and twenty-seven, and twenty-eight, and twenty-nine, and thirty.”

Behind him walked two other figures; one was the half-naked negro, the other the man with the plaited queue and the earrings, whom Tom had seen lifting the chest out of the boat. Now they were carrying the heavy box between them, laboring through the sand with shuffling tread as they bore it onward. As he who was counting



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pronounced the word "thirty," the two men set the chest down on the sand with a grunt, the white man panting and blowing and wiping his sleeve across his forehead. And immediately he who counted took out a slip of paper and marked something down upon it. They stood there for a long time, during which Tom lay behind the sand hummock watching them, and for a while the silence was uninterrupted. In the perfect stillness Tom could hear the washing of the little waves beating upon the distant beach, and once the far-away sound of a laugh from one of those who stood by the ship's boat.

One, two, three minutes passed, and then the men picked up the chest and started on again; and then again the other man began his counting. "Thirty and one, and thirty and two, and thirty and three, and thirty and four"—he walked straight across the level open, still looking intently at that which he held in his hand—"and thirty and five, and thirty and six, and thirty and seven," and so on, until the three figures disappeared in the little hollow between the two sand hills on the opposite side of the open, and still Tom could hear the sound of the counting voice in the distance.

Just as they disappeared behind the hill there was a sudden faint flash of light; and by and by, as Tom lay still listening to the counting, he heard, after a long interval, a far-away muffled rumble of distant thunder. He waited for a while, and then arose and stepped to the top of the sand hummock behind which he had been lying. He looked all about him, but there was no one else to be seen. Then he stepped down from the hummock and followed in the direction which the pirate captain and the two men



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carrying the chest had gone. He crept along cautiously, stopping now and then to make sure that he still heard the counting voice, and when it ceased he lay down upon the sand and waited until it began again.

Presently, so following the pirates, he saw the three figures again in the distance, and, skirting around back of a hill of sand covered with coarse sedge grass, he came to where he overlooked a little open level space gleaming white in the moonlight.

The three had been crossing the level of sand, and were now not more than twenty-five paces from him. They had again set down the chest, upon which the white man with the long queue and the gold earrings had seated to rest himself, the negro standing close beside him. The moon shone as bright as day and full upon his face. It was looking directly at Tom Chist, every line as keen cut with white lights and black shadows as though it had been carved in ivory and jet. He sat perfectly motionless, and Tom drew back with a start, almost thinking he had been discovered. He lay silent, his heart beating heavily in his throat; but there was no alarm, and presently he heard the counting begin again, and when he looked once more he saw they were going away straight across the little open. A soft, sliding hillock of sand lay directly in front of them. They did not turn aside, but went straight over it, the leader helping himself up the sandy slope with his cane, still counting and still keeping his eyes fixed upon that which he held in his hand. Then they disappeared again behind the white crest on the other side.

So Tom followed them cautiously until they had gone almost half a mile inland. When next he saw them clearly



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it was from a little sandy rise which looked down like the crest of a bowl upon the floor of sand below. Upon this smooth, white floor the moon beat with almost dazzling brightness.

The white man who had helped to carry the chest was now kneeling, busied at some work, though what it was Tom at first could not see. He was whittling the point of a stick into a long wooden peg, and when, by and by, he had finished what he was about, he arose and stepped to where he who seemed to be the captain had stuck his cane upright into the ground as though to mark some particular spot. He drew the cane out of the sand, thrusting the stick down in its stead. Then he drove the long peg down with a wooden mallet which the negro handed to him. The sharp rapping of the mallet upon the top of the peg sounded loud in the perfect stillness, and Tom lay watching and wondering what it all meant. The man, with quick-repeated blows, drove the peg farther and farther down into the sand until it showed only two or three inches above the surface. As he finished his work there was another faint flash of light, and by and by another smothered rumble of thunder, and Tom, as he looked out toward the westward, saw the silver rim of the round and sharply outlined thundercloud rising slowly up into the sky and pushing the other and broken drifting clouds before it.

The two white men were now stooping over the peg, the negro man watching them. Then presently the man with the cane started straight away from the peg, carrying the end of a measuring line with him, the other end of which the man with the plaited queue held against the top of the peg. When the pirate captain had reached the end



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of the measuring line he marked a cross upon the sand, and then again they measured out another stretch of space.

So they measured a distance five times over, and then, from where Tom lay, he could see the man with the queue drive another peg just at the foot of a sloping rise of sand that swept up beyond into a tall white dune marked sharp and clear against the night sky behind. As soon as the man with the plaited queue had driven the second peg into the ground they began measuring again, and so, still measuring, disappeared in another direction which took them in behind the sand dune where Tom no longer could see what they were doing.

The negro still sat by the chest where the two had left him, and so bright was the moonlight that from where he lay Tom could see the glint of it twinkling in the whites of his eyeballs.

Presently from behind the hill there came, for the third time, the sharp rapping sound of the mallet driving still another peg, and then after a while the two pirates emerged from behind the sloping whiteness into the space of moonlight again.

They came direct to where the chest lay, and the white man and the black man lifting it once more, they walked away across the level of open sand, and so on behind the edge of the hill and out of Tom's sight.

### III

Tom Chist could not longer see what the pirates were doing, neither did he dare to cross over the open space of sand that now lay between them and him. He lay there speculating as to what they were about, and meantime the



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storm cloud was rising higher and higher above the horizon, with louder and louder mutterings of thunder following each dull flash from out the cloudy, cavernous depths. In the silence he could hear an occasional click as of some iron implement, and he opined that the pirates were burying the chest, though just where they were at work he could neither see nor tell.

Still he lay there watching and listening, and by and by a puff of warm air blew across the sand, and a thumping tumble of louder thunder leaped from out the belly of the storm cloud, which every minute was coming nearer and nearer. Still Tom Chist lay watching.

Suddenly, almost unexpectedly, the three figures reappeared from behind the sand hill, the pirate captain leading the way, and the negro and white man following close behind him. They had gone about halfway across the white, sandy level between the hill and the hummock behind which Tom Chist lay, when the white man stopped and bent over as though to tie his shoe.

This brought the negro a few steps in front of his companion.

That which then followed happened so suddenly, so unexpectedly, so swiftly that Tom Chist had hardly time to realize what it all meant before it was over. As the negro passed him the white man arose suddenly and silently erect, and Tom Chist saw the white moonlight glint upon the blade of a great dirk knife which he now held in his hand. He took one, two silent, catlike steps behind the unsuspecting negro. Then there was a sweeping flash of the blade in the pallid light, and a blow, the thump of which Tom could distinctly hear even from where he lay



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stretched out upon the sand. There was an instant echoing yell from the black man, who ran stumbling forward, who stopped, who regained his footing, and then stood for an instant as though rooted to the spot.

Tom had distinctly seen the knife enter his back, and even thought that he had seen the glint of the point as it came out from the breast.

Meantime the pirate captain had stopped, and now stood with his hand resting upon his cane looking impassively on.

Then the black man started to run. The white man stood for a while glaring after him; then he, too, started after his victim upon the run. The black man was not very far from Tom when he staggered and fell. He tried to rise, then fell forward again, and lay at length. At that instant the first edge of the cloud cut across the moon, and there was a sudden darkness; but in the silence Tom heard the sound of another blow and a groan, and then presently a voice calling to the pirate captain that it was all over.

He saw the dim form of the captain crossing the level sand, and then, as the moon sailed out from behind the cloud, he saw the white man standing over a black figure that lay motionless upon the sand.

Then Tom Chist scrambled up and ran away, plunging down into the hollow of sand that lay in the shadows below. Over the next rise he ran, and down again into the next black hollow, and so on over the sliding, shifting ground, panting and gasping. It seemed to him that he could hear footsteps following, and in the terror that possessed him he almost expected every instant to feel the cold knife blade slide between his own ribs in such a thrust from behind as he had seen given to the poor black man.



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So he ran on like one in a nightmare. His feet grew heavy like lead, he panted and gasped, his breath came hot and dry in his throat. But still he ran and ran until at last he found himself in front of old Matt Abrahamson's cabin, gasping, panting, and sobbing for breath, his knees relaxed and his thighs trembling with weakness.

As he opened the door and dashed into the darkened cabin (for both Matt and Molly were long ago asleep in bed) there was a flash of light, and even as he slammed to the door behind him there was an instant peal of thunder, heavy as though a great weight had been dropped upon the roof of the sky, so that the doors and windows of the cabin rattled.

### IV

Then Tom Chist crept to bed, trembling, shuddering, bathed in sweat, his heart beating like a trip hammer, and his brain dizzy from that long, terror-inspired race through the soft sand in which he had striven to outstrip he knew not what pursuing horror.

For a long, long time he lay awake, trembling and chattering with nervous chills, and when he did fall asleep it was only to drop into monstrous dreams in which he once again saw ever enacted, with various grotesque variations, the tragic drama which his waking eyes had beheld the night before.

Then came the dawning of the broad, wet daylight, and before the rising of the sun Tom was up and out of doors to find the young day dripping with the rain of overnight.

His first act was to climb the nearest sand hill and to



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gaze out toward the offing where the pirate ship had been the day before.

It was no longer there.

Soon afterward Matt Abrahamson came out of the cabin and he called to Tom to go get a bite to eat, for it was time for them to be away fishing.

All that morning the recollection of the night before hung over Tom Chist like a great cloud of boding trouble. It filled the confined area of the little boat and spread over the entire wide spaces of sky and sea that surrounded them. Not for a moment was it lifted. Even when he was hauling in his wet and dripping line with a struggling fish at the end of it, a recurrent memory of what he had seen would suddenly come upon him, and he would groan in spirit at the recollection. He looked at Matt Abrahamson's leathery face, at his lantern jaws cavernously and stolidly chewing at a tobacco leaf, and it seemed monstrous to him that the old man should be so unconscious of the black cloud that wrapped them all about.

When the boat reached the shore again he leaped scrambling to the beach, and as soon as his dinner was eaten he hurried away to find the Dominic Jones.

He ran all the way from Abrahamson's hut to the parson's house, hardly stopping once, and when he knocked at the door he was panting and sobbing for breath.

The good man was sitting on the back-kitchen doorstep smoking his long pipe of tobacco out into the sunlight, while his wife within was rattling about among the pans and dishes in preparation of their supper, of which a strong, porky smell already filled the air.

Then Tom Chist told his story, panting, hurrying, tum-



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bling one word over another in his haste, and Parson Jones listened, breaking every now and then into an ejaculation of wonder. The light in his pipe went out and the bowl turned cold.

"And I don't see why they should have killed the poor black man," said Tom, as he finished his narrative.

"Why, that is very easy enough to understand," said "the good reverend man. "'Twas a treasure box they buried!"

In his agitation Mr. Jones had risen from his seat and was now stumping up and down, puffing at his empty tobacco pipe as though it were still alight.

"A treasure box!" cried out Tom.

"Aye, a treasure box! And that was why they killed the poor black man. He was the only one, d'ye see, besides they two who knew the place where 'twas hid, and now that they've killed him out of the way, there's nobody but themselves knows. The villains— Tut, tut, look at that now!" In his excitement the dominie had snapped the stem of his tobacco pipe in two.

"Why, then," said Tom, "if that is so, 'tis indeed a wicked, bloody treasure, and fit to bring a curse upon anybody who finds it!"

"'Tis more like to bring a curse upon the soul who buried it," said Parson Jones, "and it may be a blessing to him who finds it. But tell me, Tom, do you think you could find the place again where 'twas hid?"

"I can't tell that," said Tom, "'twas all in among the sand humps, d'ye see, and it was at night into the bargain. Maybe we could find the marks of their feet in the sand," he added.



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" 'Tis not likely," said the reverend gentleman, "for the storm last night would have washed all that away."

"I could find the place," said Tom, "where the boat was drawn up on the beach."

"Why, then, that's something to start from, Tom," said his friend. "If we can find that, then maybe we can find whither they went from there."

"If I was certain it was a treasure box," cried out Tom Chist, "I would rake over every foot of sand betwixt here and Henlopen to find it."

" 'Twould be like hunting for a pin in a haystack," said the Rev. Hilary Jones.

As Tom walked away home, it seemed as though a ton's weight of gloom had been rolled away from his soul. The next day he and Parson Jones were to go treasure-hunting together; it seemed to Tom as though he could hardly wait for the time to come.

### v

The next afternoon Parson Jones and Tom Chist started off together upon the expedition that made Tom's fortune forever. Tom carried a spade over his shoulder and the reverend gentleman walked along beside him with his cane.

As they jogged along up the beach they talked together about the only thing they could talk about—the treasure box. "And how big did you say 'twas?" quoth the good gentleman.

"About so long," said Tom Chist, measuring off upon the spade, "and about so wide, and this deep."

"And what if it should be full of money, Tom?" said



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the reverend gentleman, swinging his cane around and around in wide circles in the excitement of the thought, as he strode along briskly. "Suppose it should be full of money, what then?"

"By Moses!" said Tom Chist, hurrying to keep up with his friend, "I'd buy a ship for myself, I would, and I'd trade to Injy and to Chiny in my own boat, I would. Suppose the chist was all full of money, sir, and suppose we should find it; would there be enough in it, d'ye suppose, to buy a ship?"

"To be sure there would be enough, Tom; enough and to spare, and a good big lump over."

"And if I find it 'tis mine to keep, is it, and no mistake?"

"Why, to be sure it would be yours!" cried out the parson, in a loud voice. "To be sure it would be yours!"

~~He~~ knew nothing of the law, but the doubt of the question began at once to ferment in his brain, and he strode along in silence for a while. "Whose else would it be but yours if you find it?" he burst out. "Can you tell me that?"

"If ever I have a ship of my own," said Tom Chist, "and if ever I sail to Injy in her, I'll fetch ye back the best chist of tea, sir, that ever was fetched from Cochin Chiny."

Parson Jones burst out laughing. "Thankee, Tom," he said, "and I'll thankee again when I get my chist of tea. But tell me, Tom, didst thou ever hear of the farmer girl who counted her chickens before they were hatched?"

It was thus they talked as they hurried along up the beach together, and so came to a place at last where Tom stopped short and stood looking about him. "'Twas just here," he said, "I saw the boat last night. I know 'twas here, for I mind me of that bit of wreck yonder, and that



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there was a tall stake drove in the sand just where yon stake stands."

Parson Jones put on his barnacles and went over to the stake toward which Tom pointed. As soon as he had looked at it carefully he called out: "Why, Tom, this hath been just drove down into the sand. 'Tis a brand-new stake of wood, and the pirates must have set it here themselves as a mark, just as they drove the pegs you spoke about down into the sand."

Tom came over and looked at the stake. It was a stout piece of oak nearly two inches thick; it had been shaped with some care, and the top of it had been painted red. He shook the stake and tried to move it, but it had been driven or planted so deeply into the sand that he could not stir it. "Aye, sir," he said, "it must have been set here for a mark, for I'm sure 'twas not here yesterday or the day before." He stood looking about him to see if there were other signs of the pirates' presence. At some little distance there was the corner of something white sticking up out of the sand. He could see that it was a scrap of paper, and he pointed to it, calling out: "Yonder is a piece of paper, sir. I wonder if they left that behind them?"

It was a miraculous chance that placed that paper there. There was only an inch of it showing, and if it had not been for Tom's sharp eyes, it would certainly have been overlooked and passed by. The next windstorm would have covered it up, and all that afterward happened never would have occurred. "Look, sir," he said, as he struck the sand from it, "it hath writing on it."

"Let me see it," said Parson Jones. He adjusted the spectacles a little more firmly astride of his nose as he took the



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paper in his hand and began conning it. "What's all this?" he said; "a whole lot of figures and nothing else." And then he read aloud, "'Mark—S. S. W. S. by S.' What d'ye suppose that means, Tom?"

"I don't know, sir," said Tom. "But maybe we can understand it better if you read on."

"'Tis all a great lot of figures," said Parson Jones, "without a grain of meaning in them so far as I can see, unless they be sailing directions." And then he began reading again: "'Mark—S.S.W. by S. 40, 72, 91, 130, 151, 177, 202, 232, 256, 271'—d'ye see, it must be sailing directions—'299, 335, 362, 386, 415, 446, 469, 491, 522, 544, 571, 598'—what a lot of them there be—'626, 652, 676, 695, 724, 851, 876, 905, 940, 967. Peg. S.E. by E. 269 foot. Peg. S.S.W. by S. 427 foot. Peg. Dig to the west of this six foot.'"

"What's that about a peg?" exclaimed Tom. "What's that about a peg? And then there's something about digging, too!" It was as though a sudden light began shining into his brain. He felt himself growing quickly very excited. "Read that over again, sir," he cried. "Why, sir, you remember I told you they drove a peg into the sand. And don't they say to dig close to it? Read it over again, sir—read it over again!"

"Peg?" said the good gentleman. "To be sure it was about a peg. Let's look again. Yes, here it is. 'Peg. S.E. by E. 269 foot.'"

"Aye!" cried out Tom Chist again, in great excitement. "Don't you remember what I told you, sir, 269 foot? Sure that must be what I saw 'em measuring with the line."

Parson Jones had now caught the flame of excitement



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that was blazing up so strongly in Tom's breast. He felt as though some wonderful thing was about to happen to them. "To be sure, to be sure!" he called out, in a great big voice. "And then they measured out 427 foot south-southwest by south, and they then drove another peg, and then they buried the box six foot to the west of it. Why, Tom—why, Tom Chist! if we've read this aright, thy fortune is made."

Tom Chist stood staring straight at the old gentleman's excited face, and seeing nothing but it in all the bright infinity of sunshine. Were they, indeed, about to find the treasure chest? He felt the sun very hot upon his shoulders, and he heard the harsh, insistent jarring of a tern that hovered and circled with forked tail and sharp white wings in the sunlight just above their heads; but all the time he stood staring into the good old gentleman's face.

It was Parson Jones who first spoke. "But what do all these figures mean?" And Tom observed how the paper shook and rustled in the tremor of excitement that shook his hand. He raised the paper to the focus of his spectacles and began to read again. "'Mark 40, 72, 91—'"

"Mark?" cried out Tom, almost screaming. "Why, that must mean the stake yonder; that must be the mark." And he pointed to the oaken stick with its red tip blazing against the white shimmer of sand behind it.

"And the 40 and 72 and 91," cried the old gentleman, in a voice equally shrill—"why, that must mean the number of steps the pirate was counting when you heard him."

"To be sure that's what they mean!" cried Tom Chist. "That is it, and it can be nothing else. Oh, come, sir—come, sir; let us make haste and find it!"



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“Stay! stay!” said the good gentleman, holding up his hand; and again Tom Chist noticed how it trembled and shook. His voice was steady enough, though very hoarse, but his hand shook and trembled as though with a palsy. “Stay! stay! First of all, we must follow these measurements. And ‘tis a marvelous thing,” he croaked after a little pause, “how this paper ever came to be here.”

“Maybe it was blown here by the storm,” suggested Tom Chist.

“Like enough; like enough,” said Parson Jones. “Like enough, after the wretches had buried the chest and killed the poor black man, they were so buffeted and bowsed about by the storm that it was shook out of the man’s pocket, and thus blew away from him without his knowing aught of it.”

“But let us find the box!” cried out Tom Chist, flaming with his excitement.

“Aye, aye,” said the good man; “only stay a little, my boy, until we make sure what we’re about. I’ve got my pocket compass here, but we must have something to measure off the feet when we have found the peg. You run across to Tom Brooke’s house and fetch that measuring rod he used to lay out his new byre. While you’re gone I’ll pace off the distance marked on the paper with my pocket compass here.”

### VI

Tom Chist was gone for almost an hour, though he ran nearly all the way and back, upborne as on the wings of the wind. When he returned, panting, Parson Jones was nowhere to be seen, but Tom saw his footsteps leading



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away inland, and he followed the scuffling marks in the smooth surface across the sand humps and down into the hollows, and by and by found the good gentleman in a spot he at once knew as soon as he laid his eyes upon it.

It was the open space where the pirates had driven their first peg, and where Tom Chist had afterward seen them kill the poor black man. Tom Chist gazed around as though expecting to see some sign of the tragedy, but the space was as smooth and as undisturbed as a floor, excepting where, midway across it, Parson Jones, who was now stooping over something on the ground, had trampled it all around about.

When Tom Chist saw him he was still bending over, scraping sand away from something he had found.

It was the first peg!

Inside of half an hour they had found the second and third pegs, and Tom Chist stripped off his coat, and began digging like mad down into the sand, Parson Jones standing over him watching him. The sun was sloping well toward the west when the blade of Tom Chist's spade struck upon something hard.

If it had been his own heart that he had hit in the sand his breast could hardly have thrilled more sharply.

It was the treasure box!

Parson Jones himself leaped down into the hole, and began scraping away the sand with his hands as though he had gone crazy. At last, with some difficulty, they tugged and hauled the chest up out of the sand to the surface, where it lay covered all over with the grit that clung to it. It was securely locked and fastened with a padlock, and it took a good many blows with the blade of the spade to



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burst the bolt. Parson Jones himself lifted the lid. Tom Chist leaned forward and gazed down into the open box. He would not have been surprised to have seen it filled full of yellow gold and bright jewels. It was filled half full of books and papers, and half full of canvas bags tied safely and securely around and around with cords of string.

Parson Jones lifted out one of the bags, and it jingled as he did so. It was full of money.

He cut the string, and with trembling, shaking hands handed the bag to Tom, who, in an ecstasy of wonder and dizzy with delight, poured out with swimming sight upon the coat spread on the ground a cataract of shining silver money that rang and twinkled and jingled as it fell in a shining heap upon the coarse cloth.

Parson Jones held up both hands into the air, and Tom stared at what he saw, wondering whether it was all so, and whether he was really awake. It seemed to him as though he was in a dream.

There were two-and-twenty bags in all in the chest: ten of them full of silver money, eight of them full of gold money, three of them full of gold dust, and one small bag with jewels wrapped up in wad cotton and paper.

“ ‘Tis enough,” cried out Parson Jones, “to make us both rich men as long as we live.”

The burning summer sun, though sloping in the sky, beat down upon them as hot as fire; but neither of them noticed it. Neither did they notice hunger nor thirst nor fatigue, but sat there as though in a trance, with the bags of money scattered on the sand around them, a great pile of money heaped upon the coat, and the open chest beside them. It was an hour of sundown before Parson Jones had





Tom poured out a cataract of shining silver money



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begun fairly to examine the books and papers in the chest.

Of the three books, two were evidently log books of the pirates who had been lying off the mouth of the Delaware Bay all this time. The other book was written in Spanish, and was evidently the log book of some captured prize.

It was then, sitting there upon the sand, the good old gentleman reading in his high, crackling voice, that they first learned from the bloody records in those two books who it was who had been lying inside the Cape all this time, and that it was the famous Captain Kidd. Every now and then the reverend gentleman would stop to exclaim, "Oh, the bloody wretch!" or, "Oh, the desperate, cruel, villains!" and then would go on reading again a scrap here and a scrap there.

And all the while Tom Chist sat and listened, every now and then reaching out furtively and touching the heap of money still lying upon the coat.

One might be inclined to wonder why Captain Kidd had kept those bloody records. He had probably laid them away because they so incriminated many of the great people of the colony of New York that, with the books in evidence, it would have been impossible to bring the pirate to justice without dragging a dozen or more fine gentlemen into the dock along with him. If he could have kept them in his own possession they would doubtless have been a great weapon of defense to protect him from the gallows. Indeed, when Captain Kidd was finally brought to conviction and hung, he was not accused of his piracies, but of striking a mutinous seaman upon the head with a bucket and accidentally killing him. The authorities did not dare try him for piracy. He was really hung because



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he was a pirate, and we know that it was the log books that Tom Chist brought to New York that did the business for him; he was accused and convicted of manslaughter for killing of his own ship carpenter with a bucket.

So Parson Jones, sitting there in the slanting light, read through these terrible records of piracy, and Tom, with the pile of gold and silver money beside him, sat and listened to him.

What a spectacle, if anyone had come upon them! But they were alone, with the vast arch of sky empty above them and the wide white stretch of sand a desert around them. The sun sank lower and lower, until there was only time to glance through the other papers in the chest.

They were nearly all goldsmiths' bills of exchange drawn in favor of certain of the most prominent merchants of New York. Parson Jones, as he read over the names, knew of nearly all the gentlemen by hearsay. Aye, here was this gentleman; he thought that name would be among 'em. What? Here is Mr. So-and-so. Well, if all they say is true, the villain has robbed one of his own best friends. "I wonder," he said, "why the wretch should have hidden these papers so carefully away with the other treasures, for they could do him no good?" Then, answering his own question: "Like enough because these will give him a hold over the gentlemen to whom they are drawn so that he can make a good bargain for his own neck before he gives the bills back to their owners. I tell you what it is, Tom," he continued, "it is you yourself shall go to New York and bargain for the return of these papers. 'Twill be as good as another fortune to you."

The majority of the bills were drawn in favor of one



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Richard Chillingsworth, Esquire. "And he is," said Parson Jones, "one of the richest men in the province of New York. You shall go to him with the news of what we have found."

"When shall I go?" said Tom Chist.

"You shall go upon the very first boat we can catch," said the parson. He had turned, still holding the bills in his hand, and was now fingering over the pile of money that yet lay tumbled out upon the coat. "I wonder, Tom," said he, "if you could spare me a score or so of these doubloons?"

"You shall have fifty score, if you choose," said Tom, bursting with gratitude and with generosity in his newly found treasure.

"You are as fine a lad as ever I saw, Tom," said the parson, "and I'll thank you to the last day of my life."

Tom scooped up a double handful of silver money. "Take it, sir," he said, "and you may have as much more as you want of it."

He poured it into the dish that the good man made of his hands, and the parson made a motion as though to empty it into his pocket. Then he stopped, as though a sudden doubt had occurred to him. "I don't know that 'tis fit for me to take this pirate money, after all," he said.

"But you are welcome to it," said Tom.

Still the parson hesitated. "Nay," he burst out, "I'll not take it; 'tis blood money." And as he spoke he chucked the whole double handful into the now empty chest, then arose and dusted the sand from his breeches. Then, with a great deal of bustling energy, he helped to tie the bags again and put them all back into the chest.



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They reburied the chest in the place whence they had taken it, and then the parson folded the precious paper of directions, placed it carefully in his wallet, and his wallet in his pocket. "Tom," he said, for the twentieth time, "your fortune has been made this day."

And Tom Chist, as he rattled in his breeches pocket the half dozen doubloons he had kept out of his treasure, felt that what his friend had said was true.

As the two went back homeward across the level space of sand Tom Chist suddenly stopped stock-still and stood looking about him. "'Twas just here," he said, digging his heel down into the sand, "that they killed the poor black man."

"And here he lies buried for all time," said Parson Jones; and as he spoke he dug his cane down into the sand. Tom Chist shuddered. He would not have been surprised if the ferrule of the cane had struck something soft beneath that level surface. But it did not, nor was any sign of that tragedy ever seen again. For, whether the pirates had carried away what they had done and buried it elsewhere, or whether the storm in blowing the sand had completely leveled off and hidden all sign of that tragedy where it was enacted, certain it is that it never came to sight again—at least so far as Tom Chist and the Rev. Hilary Jones ever knew.

### VII

This is the story of the treasure box. All that remains now is to conclude the story of Tom Chist, and to tell of what came of him in the end.



## *Tom Chist and the Treasure Box*

He did not go back again to live with old Matt Abrahamson. Parson Jones had now taken charge of him and his fortunes, and Tom did not have to go back to the fisherman's hut.

Old Abrahamson talked a great deal about it, and would come in his cups and harangue good Parson Jones, making a vast protestation of what he would do to Tom—if he ever caught him—for running away. But Tom on all these occasions kept carefully out of his way, and nothing came of the old man's threatenings.

Tom used to go over to see his foster mother now and then, but always when the old man was away from home. And Molly Abrahamson used to warn him to keep out of her father's way. "He's in as vile a humor as ever I see, Tom," she said; "he sits sulking all day long, and 'tis my belief he'd kill ye if he caught ye."

Of course Tom said nothing, even to her, about the treasure, and he and the reverend gentleman kept the knowledge thereof to themselves. About three weeks later Parson Jones managed to get him shipped aboard of a vessel bound for New York town, and a few days later Tom Chist landed at that place. He had never been in such a town before, and he could not sufficiently wonder and marvel at the number of brick houses, at the multitude of people coming and going along the fine, hard, earthen sidewalk, at the shops and the stores where goods hung in the windows, and, most of all, the fortifications and the battery at the point, at the rows of threatening cannon, and at the scarlet-coated sentries pacing up and down the ramparts. All this was very wonderful, and so were the clustered boats riding at anchor in the harbor.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

It was like a new world, so different was it from the sand hills and the sedgy levels of Henlopen.

Tom Chist took up his lodgings at a coffee house near to the town hall, and thence he sent by the postboy, a letter written by Parson Jones to Master Chillingsworth. In a little while the boy returned, with a message, asking Tom to come up to Mr. Chillingsworth's house that afternoon at two o'clock.

Tom went thither with a great deal of trepidation, and his heart fell away altogether when he found it a fine, grand brick house, three stories high, and with wrought-iron letters across the front.

The counting house was in the same building; but Tom, because of Mr. Jones's letter, was conducted directly into the parlor, where the great rich man was awaiting his coming. He was sitting in a leather-covered armchair, smoking a pipe of tobacco, and with a bottle of fine old Madeira close to his elbow.

Tom had not had a chance to buy a new suit of clothes yet, and so he cut no very fine figure in the rough dress he had brought with him from Henlopen. Nor did Mr. Chillingsworth seem to think very highly of his appearance, for he sat looking sideways at Tom as he smoked.

"Well, my lad," he said, "and what is this great thing you have to tell me that is so mightily wonderful? I got what's-his-name—Mr. Jones's—letter, and now I am ready to hear what you have to say."

But if he thought but little of his visitor's appearance at first, he soon changed his sentiments toward him, for Tom had not spoken twenty words when Mr. Chillingsworth's whole aspect changed. He straightened himself up



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in his seat, laid aside his pipe, pushed away his glass of Madeira, and bade Tom take a chair.

He listened without a word as Tom Chist told of the buried treasure, of how he had seen the poor negro murdered, and of how he and Parson Jones had recovered the chest again. Only once did Mr. Chillingsworth interrupt the narrative. "And to think," he cried, "that the villain this very day walks about New York town as though he were an honest man, ruffling it with the best of us! But if we can only get hold of these log books you speak of. Go on; tell me more of this."

When Tom Chist's narrative was ended, Mr. Chillingsworth's bearing was as different as daylight is from dark. He asked a thousand questions, all in the most polite and gracious tone imaginable, and not only urged a glass of his fine old Madeira upon Tom, but asked him to stay to supper. There was nobody to be there, he said, but his wife and daughter.

Tom, all in a panic at the very thought of the two ladies, sturdily refused to stay even for the dish of tea Mr. Chillingsworth offered him.

He did not know that he was destined to stay there as long as he should live.

"And now," said Mr. Chillingsworth, "tell me about yourself."

"I have nothing to tell, Your Honor," said Tom, "except that I was washed up out of the sea."

"Washed up out of the sea!" exclaimed Mr. Chillingsworth. "Why, how was that? Come, begin at the beginning, and tell me all."

Thereupon Tom Chist did as he was bidden, beginning



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

at the very beginning and telling everything just as Molly Abrahamson had often told it to him. As he continued, Mr. Chillingsworth's interest changed into an appearance of stronger and stronger excitement. Suddenly he jumped up out of his chair and began to walk up and down the room.

"Stop! Stop!" he cried out at last, in the midst of something Tom was saying. "Stop! Stop! Tell me; do you know the name of the vessel that was wrecked, and from which you were washed ashore?"

"I've heard it said," said Tom Chist, "'twas the *Bristol Merchant*."

"I knew it! I knew it!" exclaimed the great man, in a loud voice, flinging his hands up into the air. "I felt it was so the moment you began the story. But tell me this, was there nothing found with you with a mark or a name upon it?"

"There was a kerchief," said Tom, "marked with a T. and a C."

"Theodosia Chillingsworth!" cried out the merchant. "I knew it! I knew it! Heavens! To think of anything so wonderful happening as this! Boy! Boy! Dost thou know who thou art? Thou art my own brother's son. His name was Oliver Chillingsworth, and he was my partner in business, and thou art his son." Then he ran out into the entryway, shouting and calling for his wife and daughter to come. So Tom Chist—or Thomas Chillingsworth, as he now was to be called—did stay to supper, after all.

This is the story, and I hope you may like it. For Tom Chist became rich and great, as was to be supposed, and



## *Tom Chist and the Treasure Box*

he married his pretty cousin Theodosia (who had been named for his own mother, drowned in the *Bristol Merchant*).

He did not forget his friends, but had Parson Jones brought to New York to live.

As to Molly and Matç Abrahamson, they both enjoyed a pension of ten pounds a year for as long as they lived; for now that all was well with him, Tom bore no grudge against the old fisherman for all the drubbings he had suffered.

The treasure box was brought on to New York, and if Tom Chist did not get all the money there was in it (as Parson Jones had opined he would) he got at least a good big lump of it.

And it is my belief that those log books did more to get Captain Kidd arrested in Boston town and hanged in London than anything else that was brought up against him.





# The Pirate Rat

By JEAN MUIR

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**M**IKE WAS a rat—a swaggering, seagoing rat with a taste for cheese and adventure. He had lost one toe in some water-front brawl and another in a Chinese junk—a very pirate of a rat, with a price on his tail in half the ports of the world. Such was the extraordinary individual who appeared at Benjamin's door one October night.

Now, up to that moment, there was never a rat who led a pleasanter or happier life than Benjamin. His plump little sides fairly bulged with nuts and good cheer; his bright eyes twinkled with content, and there was about the whole of him an air of modest well-being that was indeed pleasant to see. And, then, along came Mike. Benjamin certainly did not expect him. He was just setting out the supper dishes and humming a little tune when he heard the knock.

“Come in!” Benjamin called out in a cheery voice. The door flew open and there stood Mike. At first glance, Benjamin was somewhat taken aback but, after one frightened little gasp, he quickly pulled himself together and hurried to greet the sailor.



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"Why!" he cried eagerly, "you must be my cousin Michael!"

Guests seldom came to Benjamin's little out-of-the-way house—and such a guest as this one, too! Benjamin trotted about excitedly, laying an extra place at the table and heaping more acorns on the fire. At supper, he was much too excited to eat, and even when the plates were cleared away and they were sitting side by side, warming their toes at the fire, each with a nice big glass of cider, Benjamin had to pinch himself to make sure he was not dreaming.

"A tidy little place, you have here."

"It *is* nice, isn't it?" Benjamin said modestly.

"Built it yourself?"

"Every bit," said Benjamin, and then, modestly, "it's only a little house, you know."

"Been making out pretty well, eh?"

"Well," said Benjamin, "I've worked pretty hard and I've managed to lay up a little something—not an awful lot, of course, just a bit of wheat and some nuts and an apple or two. You've no idea how much *safer* it makes a person feel to know there's something laid by."

Mike nodded his head.

Benjamin hesitated a moment. "I've some nails, too."

"Is that right?"

"Yes," said Benjamin eagerly, "nice new ones. And an Indian penny. I found that in the drainpipe, and quite a lot of corks—oh, ever so many. Of course, it hasn't been easy. It's meant grubbing about all day and every day and going without. But I don't mind. Sometimes I say to myself, 'Well, if worse comes to worst, I can just close my door and I've everything here I need.' I suppose," he went



## *The Pirate Rat*

on apologetically, "it seems a dull sort of life to you." Benjamin's voice trailed off and for a moment he sat staring into the fire. Finally he looked wistfully at his cousin. "I daresay you've been any number of places—to China and the South Seas and all that?"

"Oh, well," said Mike, "being a sailor—"

"Of course," said Benjamin. He hesitated a moment. "You know," he said shyly, "sometimes of an evening, when I'm sitting here by the fire, I tell myself stories, all about ships and sailor men and pirates. I suppose it's sort of silly, but that's what makes it seem so queer—your sitting there, I mean. You've really done all those things."

Mike smiled to himself, as if he were remembering. At last he began to speak, and as Benjamin listened, it seemed to him that he looked into a strange, new world. Little by little, the acorn fire and the snug little room faded away, and in its place was the rolling of a ship's deck and the creaking of a ship's rigging, strange coastlines on the horizon, strange ports and crooked streets, wonderful with the odor of spices. For an instant Benjamin caught a glimpse of tiny tropical islands, afloat on a green sea, where lonely palm trees nod and parrots and flamingoes live; of the bright, gay life of Rio; of tempests and stout hearts and the merry life of ports; and, through it all, the singing of the tides and the haunting music of the sails.

So rapt he was, that Benjamin did not notice when the sailor had finished speaking and sat watching him. "Oooh," he said at last, coming back to earth with a long shuddering sigh, "so that's what it's like!"

"It's not all beer and skittles," said the sailor. "There's shipwreck, too, and the hard days around the Horn."



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

"Oh, but what difference does it make?" Benjamin gasped. "It's so-so—sort of daring and fine."

"Did you ever think of taking to the sea yourself, Benny?"

"Oh, no, not really. I guess I'm nothing but a fireside adventurer, but I love to hear about it, and, somehow, it does make me feel as if I'd missed something, when you tell all about those splendid things."

"Benny," said the sailor, patting him on the shoulder, "you're a fine little chap." Then he frowned and stirred uneasily. "If I'd known what a good fellow you were, I'd never have come here. Well," he said abruptly, finishing his cider at a gulp and standing up, "I'll be getting along."

"Must you really?" Benjamin asked wistfully. "Can't you stay, just for a day or two?"

Mike gave a hitch to his belt. "No," he said, "I'll be getting along. Business," he added, and it seemed to Benjamin that the lines around his mouth grew more stern and grim.

"I suppose," he ventured, "that you're only in town for a little while—just between ships?"

Mike nodded. "I'm staying on the *Emma*, that old derelict at pier D. Good and roomy," he added with a wry sort of smile, and cocking his hat over one ear, he sauntered to the door, where he paused for a moment and stood looking down at Benjamin. "It hasn't worked out just the way I planned. Well, so long."

"Come back, won't you?" Benjamin begged. "Next time you're here. You've no idea what it's meant to me, having you drop in like this."

Mike answered with a wave.



## *The Pirate Rat*

As long as Benjamin could see the lean, grey figure of the seaman, he stood peering after him. Finally he came in slowly and closed the door. "Ooooh," he said to himself and sat down weakly on the edge of his bed. Somehow, he felt a little dizzy.

"Heave ho!" he whispered and fancied for an instant that he could feel the plunge of a ship through heavy sea. But the next instant, there he was back in the little room again. The fire still was burning brightly. The armchair was drawn up by the hearth and there were his bedroom slippers, neatly placed, side by side. Nothing had changed, and yet, as Benjamin looked about him, the room seemed strangely small and cramped.

"Oh, dear," Benjamin said to himself, "*it is* a dull sort of life." He thought wistfully of Mike, even now, perhaps, planning some new adventure.

Benjamin sighed and shook himself. "Well, well," he said, "we can't all be buccaneers," and he began to bustle about the room, closing the windows, winding up the clock, and putting an empty milk bottle by the door. Everything was made snug for the night. Generally, at about this time, Benjamin would scramble into bed, blow out the candle, pull the blankets up to his chin and be fast asleep before he had time to turn over once. But tonight, Benjamin did not feel like going to bed. Instead, he sat down in the armchair and stared moodily into the fire.

"Nothing ever happens to me," Benjamin said gloomily, "no romance, no adventure, nothing. Just grubbing about, grubbing about. If *I* could go to sea, just once—"

"Well, why not?" Benjamin said suddenly. "Why should I stay in this stuffy little house, working away, day



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

in and day out? Why shouldn't I go right down there to town and sail away with the best of them?"

The thought frightened Benjamin a little bit, at first, and yet—

"I could find Michael," he told himself. "He said he was on the *Emma*. He'd help me to get started." Going to the door, he opened it softly and peered out.

\* \* \*

The city seemed very strange to Benjamin, who was used only to the sound of the wind among the maple leaves and the deep, rich perfume of wild grapes. Here, strange odors reached him from the crooked alleyways, and the rumble of carts from the streets. The arc lights were strange, too, like a whole company of moons and the jumbled masts and spars of the ships along the waterfront rose like a forest against the night.

Benjamin felt very bold and adventurous as he skirted along the wharves, keeping in the darkest shadows and clutching his bundle tighter. He could hear the water lapping against the pier and catch black glimpses of it, too, through holes in the rotting board. It was—yes, it was almost frightening. Benjamin's whiskers were all a-quiver and his fat little sides trembled with the excitement of it as he scuttled across the open places or peeked timidly out from behind the barrels and coils of rope on the dock.

The *Emma* stood a little apart from the other vessels, a great black hulk of a ship, with seaweed dripping from its rusty sides. "Cousin Michael!" Benjamin called softly. There was no answer but the scuttling of a crab across the deck above him. Benjamin clutched his bundle tighter.



## *The Pirate Rat*

“Cousin Michael!” he called again, and when there was no answer, “it *is* late,” he said to himself. “I suppose Cousin Michael has gone to bed. I guess I’ll just go aboard.”

“Oh, dear,” he said, when he had scrambled up a rope and into the dark center of the ship. “Oh, dear, I don’t think there’s anybody here at all. It’s so dreadfully black and still and sort of stuffy somehow. Why!” he said, pricking up his ears, “there is a light, after all.”

“It must be Michael,” he said, suddenly feeling very gay and brave again. “Won’t he be surprised to see me!” Hunching his bundle up, Benjamin pattered toward the light, only to stop after a moment. “It mightn’t be Michael, after all,” he thought. “I’ll just slip up quietly and peek, first.”

His paws made no sound as he climbed over a heap of rusty chains and squeezed behind a big empty barrel. Cautiously, oh, ever so cautiously, he peeked around the corner and, suddenly, his tail stiffened and his enquiring whiskers froze still.

There stood Mike, his back against the bulkhead and his feet well apart, while facing him were three of the most savage rats Benjamin ever had seen.

“Where is it? Where is it?” they clamored, pressing toward him.

Mike shook his head. “I haven’t got it,” he said.

The rats fell back, watching him suspiciously. Finally one, a sturdy fellow, with a bandage tied around his tail, spoke up. “You mean this cousin Benjamin you’ve been talking about isn’t rich, after all?”

“He had it all right,” said Mike. “Cellars full.”

“Well?” said the rats eagerly.



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"Well," said Mike, "Benny is a nice little fellow. I couldn't steal from him."

At that there was dead silence. From his hiding place, Benjamin could see Michael's tail begin to twitch uneasily and felt his own heart beating hard against his ribs.

"This is a fine story you're telling us, Mike," the first rat said at last, "us as has followed you over the Seven Seas and fought with you and starved with you. Do you hear what he says, boys? He can't steal from his rich kin—that's what he says—but he can sit by and see his pals starve."

"You're not fooling any of us, Mike," said the second rat. "You got the stuff, but you've hid it away for yourself."

"I'm sick of this," said the third rat, speaking now for the first time. "He's a traitor," he said. "Come on, boys." And while Benjamin watched in terror, the three rats set upon Michael. Under their savage attack, Michael was borne helplessly to the ground.

Then Benjamin forgot his terror. With a sudden, angry little squeal, he hurled himself into the thick of the combat. For an instant, the rats loosened their hold on Mike to whirl toward this new assailant, and in that instant, Mike was on his feet again.

Benjamin really was quite beside himself with the rage of battle. He fought furiously, side by side with Mike, and presently, the three rats appeared to give ground. Step by step, Benjamin and Mike forced them backward, until at last, and of one accord, they turned tail and scuttled hurriedly away.

As for Benjamin, he was so surprised at the whole affair,



## *The Pirate Rat*

particularly at the part he himself had played, that he could do nothing but stand and gasp. It was Mike who broke the silence. "Nobly fought, Benny," he said. "Nobly fought. You saved my life and no mistake."

Benjamin wriggled with pleasure, but he managed to say, quite carelessly, "Oh, my, that was nothing."

Mike shook his head. "Benny," he said earnestly, "we'll stick together, you and I. We'll ship out together for the Orient, Benny. There's always a chance there for two chaps who aren't afraid of hard times or a bit of a fight, now and then. A-ah, Singapore," he murmured. "Bangkok—the spices, there, Benny—"

Benjamin was astonished. Instead of longing for those exciting places, he found himself thinking of his own little house under the maples and of how the sunlight shone through the autumn leaves and struck against the sturdy little door. He seemed to hear the clock ticking away and the cheery crackle of the acorn fire.

Benjamin shook his head to Michael's pleadings. Just then, the *Emma* gave a little lurch. That settled it. Benjamin's tummy felt plain horrid and a bit of moisture collected on his nose.

"Good-by, Michael," he said hurriedly. "And don't forget, there's always a bed and a welcome for you, under the maples." And with a hasty little wave, he scampered away, right down the rope and across the wharves. He didn't even stop to admire the sights of the town, but scurried through the streets and into the country again. Oh, the sweet touch of the earth under his paws!





# Cap'n Ezra, Privateer

By JAMES D. ADAMS

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BEFORE THE first snowfall, Cap'n Ezra's schooner was planked and calked. Below the waterline she was sheathed with copper. "Expensive, but kain't no barnacles nor seaweed stick to copper," explained Cap'n Ezra. "Nothin' slows down a ship like a foul bottom." The sides were scraped smooth and painted a gleaming black. As she stood there on the sloping ways, stern towards the river, with her lean, graceful bow curving high above the dully gleaming copper, she seemed to the boys the most beautiful thing they had ever seen. Fastened to the prow, just below where the bowsprit would stick out, was a carved, gilded head of a girl with curls blowing back. "Looks kinda like Polly," said Dave. "Blamed if she don't," said Cap'n Ezra. "Say! That gives me an idee. The little ship has to be christened when she's launched. Wouldn't no real sailors go in her otherwise. Why don't we name her 'Polly'? Polly an' me be good friends an' there ain't no name I'd ruther have."

The big day for the launching came at last. Short, tem-



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

porary masts had been stepped, and flags and pennants of many colors fluttered on a line from the bow to the tops of the masts and back to the stern. A high platform that had just been erected a few feet in front of the bow was level with the gilded figurehead. On this platform stood Polly, grasping a beribboned bottle of champagne which was attached to a cord from the deck. Her eyes sparkled and her face was tense with excitement. Her father and mother, Cap'n Ezra, and a little group of honored guests were behind her. Dave and Billy had begged permission to go aboard with the crew of riggers stationed on deck. Workmen slushed grease all along the ways that led down to the water. Then, at a signal, workmen with great sledge hammers began to knock out the wedges that held back the cradle in which the schooner rested. The little ship suddenly seemed to wake and become a live thing. The sharp bow moved slowly away from Polly. "Let her go, Polly," yelled Cap'n Ezra. With all her might, Polly swung the bottle of champagne against the bow and screamed, "I christen thee *Polly*."

The *Polly* moved faster and faster. The rudder touched the water, and then it seemed for an instant that the whole stern would dive completely under. Great waves curved away on either side and crashed against the wharves.

Then in looping bounds, like a ship riding heavy seas, the *Polly* shot far out into the river with hawsers streaming after her from whirring winches on shore. At last she swung with the tide, her buoyant, empty hull seeming almost to rest on top of the water, and several feet of her copper sheathing glinting in the sun. The winches began to wind in the hawsers, slowly, lest a sudden pull should



## *Cap'n Ezra, Privateer*

capsize the unballasted hull, and the *Polly* was made fast to the rigging-wharf.

Next day, the pig-iron ballast was carefully stowed in the hold, and the *Polly* sank to her proper waterline. The long, tapering masts were stepped, and the riggers started work on her, with the aid and constant inspection of Dave and Billy.

The working hours were cut short now by the early dusk, so the boys had a little extra time before supper, and weren't so sleepy after it. One evening they were calling on Cap'n Ezra, and brought up their determination to be on the *Polly* when she put to sea.

"I kinda 'spicioned ye had some sech idee—the way ye took charge buildin' her," he chuckled. "Dunno ez I blame ye. Nothin' I could say would alter ye. When a lad plans to go to sea, he goes. Privateerin' be dangerous and ye stand a chanct o' bein' kilt, but if ye warn't fightin' on the *Polly*, ye'd be in the army, which ain't any safer."

Cap'n Ezra pulled away on his long pipe, and a serious look came over his genial, wrinkled face. "Lads," he said at last, quietly. "Privateerin' ain't a lark—it be war. It would be nothin' but piratin' if the idee wuz jest to steal ships an' git rich. I built the *Polly* cuz the only way to make England respect us and treat us fair is to strike at her commerce. She don't care nothin' for our army nor navy. She's got hundreds of ships-of-the-line and frigates to our ten frigates. But it would cripple her to lose many cargo ships. Our little ship *Polly* can harm England more than any of our warships. And soon ez war starts there'll be hundreds of our privateers preyin' on British shippin' all over the world."



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

The boys gazed soberly at the open fire. They hadn't thought about war in just that way. Privateering had seemed merely a chance to go to sea and have adventures.

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The *Polly* was headed due east to cut across the ship lanes from Halifax to the West Indies, and Eben Starbuck's watch went below for supper. Dave and Billy were on his watch, and the three sat down at the long table in the cabin with Cap'n Ezra and the fourth mate. Alexander served them a huge roast of beef in honor of the occasion—the last fresh meat they would get for some time. Cap'n Ezra was in high spirits. "Shouldn't be a mite surprised if you lads see your first prize tomorrow. Don't none of the ships at sea know that war be declared, an' won't take no precautions. It ought to be easy pickin' for a week or two. That's why I bin so anxious to git to sea fust thing. I reckon we be the only privateer in the North Atlantic, though pro'bly some Baltimore privateers has started, 'count o' bein' so clost to Washington an' gittin' the news fust."

The boys hurried on deck as soon as they were through supper, and spent the rest of their off-duty time on the crosstrees with the regular lookout, straining their eyes for the first glimpse of white sails on the horizon. In fact, the whole crew had the same idea, for the first to sight a prize would receive a bonus of one hundred dollars.

The first mate's watch was from eight to twelve o'clock, and the boys paced back and forth in the stern or leaned over the aft rail watching the wake, with nothing much to do, as the *Polly* held steadily on her course with a beam



## *Cap'n Ezra, Privateer*

wind. They turned in at last for four hours of sleep, hoping to be wakened by the cry, "All hands on deck."

The sun was two hours up when the lookout on the foremast yelled, "Sail-ho." Eben Starbuck climbed into the shrouds with his glass. He picked up a spot of white on the horizon almost dead ahead. He studied it for a long minute while all hands watched him, hardly breathing. "Headed south," he announced, dropping back to the deck. "Sail-ho," rang out a double cry from the main crosstrees where Dave and Billy were perched. "Where away?" bellowed Eben Starbuck. "On the starb'd quarter," yelled the boys together, hanging onto stays and dancing with excitement. Again Eben Starbuck balanced himself in the rigging and peered long through his glass. "A brig headed north," he called.

So here was a problem right at the start. Two possible prizes, and not much to choose between them as to distance. The *Polly* couldn't take both. Cap'n Ezra called a council by the wheel. "What's your jedgment, Eben?" he asked. The mate studied the wind and measured distances with his eyes. "Looks like we'd step along faster after the one going south. But it would be a stern chase at the end." "'Tis kinda bafflin'," pondered Cap'n Ezra. "There's one thing we ought to think of, though. The *Polly* be the only ship that kin capture that north-bound brig afore she gits to Halifax, whereas there be a chanct that Baltimore privateers might pick up the one goin' south. 'Sides, I'd kinda figgered on stayin' as fur north ez we kin. We got the North Atlantic to ourselves for a week or two. Some o' them ships from England be rich-laden."



## *Pirates, Pirates, Pirates*

So the *Polly* was close-hauled for a long reach that would cut the course of the brig at a point many miles to the north. Every stitch of canvas she would carry was hoisted. Eben Starbuck kept the crew trimming and re-trimming the sails until each was flat and hard as a board against the wind pressure, with just the faintest flutter at the luff of the mainsail, showing that the *Polly* was as close to the wind as she could get. She boiled along with lee-rail close to the green, spray-streaked surge, her sharp bow snapping at the crest of each wave and tossing it scornfully over her head to sluice the deck. The cross sea snarled and pounded at her stout oak sides as she lifted out of the hollows to wave-tops and then rocked back into the trough.

Hour after hour, the *Polly* raced to head off the prize. The brig was visible now from the deck and seemed to be holding steadily to her course. "Hope she don't git 'spicious an' start to run for it, Eben," said Cap'n Ezra. "Come night, she might double on us an' git away."

Sure enough, when the ships were two miles apart, the skipper of the brig became alarmed at the swift schooner closing in so relentlessly, veered off before the wind and began to crowd on sail. But it was too late. The *Polly* bounded after the brig like a hound after a rabbit. The distance between them grew less minute by minute. Soon the boys could see figures rushing about the deck and men in the rigging, fiddling with the sails. When the *Polly* was only a quarter of a mile astern, the Stars and Stripes were hoisted to her mainsail gaff and a cannon barked to leeward. The brig came up into the wind and hove to with sails flopping, rolling in the trough. The *Polly* stormed past under her stern with crew stationed at the guns. Cap'n



## *Cap'n Ezra, Privateer*

Ezra seized a speaking trumpet and bellowed, "What ship be that?" "British ship *Marybelle* outa Kingston," came back the answer faintly. "Ye be the prize o' the ship *Polly*," trumpeted Cap'n Ezra. "War wuz declared June 18th by United States agin Great Britain. Lower your colors."

The British flag fluttered to the deck and the *Polly* hove to a cable-length to leeward. Eben Starbuck and a boarding crew of ten sailors armed with cutlasses jumped into the longboat, which was lowered from the stern, and rowed alongside the *Marybelle*, the *Polly* standing by with cannon and muskets trained on the brig. The boarding crew climbed over the side and herded the brig's crew into the waist. Eben Starbuck approached the *Marybelle*'s captain, standing gloomily by the wheel, and said genially, "Sorry to have to take your ship, Cap'n, but it's fortunes of war. What cargo be ye carryin'?"

"Rum, tobacco, sugar, and molasses, bound for Halifax," grunted the captain.

The *Marybelle* carried a crew of ten, including the mate. Three of them were American sailors who had been impressed by a British cruiser and had deserted at the first opportunity and shipped on the *Marybelle*, hoping to get to the United States from Halifax. They would have been hung for desertion if recaptured by a British naval ship. These three begged to join the *Polly* and were gladly accepted, for the banes of privateering were how to dispose of prisoners and to provide enough men to man prizes. Two of the crew were Norwegians who also asked to join the *Polly*, but finally agreed to help sail the *Marybelle* to Boston, with promise of release when they got there.



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The remaining prisoners were piled into the longboat and rowed to the *Polly*, the three American sailors and the *Marybelle's* captain following in the brig's boat. Then a prize crew of six men under the command of the *Polly's* second mate returned to take possession of the *Marybelle*. In the meantime, Eben Starbuck had rummaged the cabin and discovered five thousand dollars in specie, which he took with him when he returned to the *Polly*.

The *Marybelle* got under way and headed for Boston, and the *Polly* turned her bows northward, seeking new victims.

Dave and Billy had watched the operation from the *Polly's* deck with intense interest but some disappointment. "Bout ez excitin' ez plowin' a corn field," remarked Billy discontentedly. Cap'n Ezra laughed. "That's the way it be mostly," he explained. "But onct in a while they try to put up a fight. That *Marybelle* carries more guns than us but the sailors wouldn't work 'em."

"Well, lads, if the *Marybelle* gits to Boston, the *Polly* be paid for," said Cap'n Ezra cheerfully. "Ship an' cargo ought to fetch 'tween forty and fifty thousand dollars at auction. I gits half as owner an' the rest be divided into sixty-four shares, you an' the crew takin' one share apiece."

Dave did some quick figuring. "Gosh! One share would amount to more than three hundred dollars. Better pay than shipbuilders get, ain't it, Billy?" he grinned.

"Now ye see why Newburyport be so 'xcited 'bout privateerin'," explained Cap'n Ezra. "Some of the sailors who wuz hard up sold half their share in future prize money for enough to keep their families a year. 'Course it be jest a plain gamble. The *Polly* might be sunk tomor-



## *Cap'n Ezra, Privateer*

row. On t'other hand, she may take a million dollars' wuth of prizes. A lot o' them big houses on High Street wuz built with privateerin' money. Shares in privateers is bein' traded up and down State Street by the thousand, sellin' for more or less 'cordin' to the ship an' cap'n. It's turrible unhealthy. People don't pay no 'tention to bus'ness. They be jest desprit to git rich' over night 'thout doin' any work for it."

"I can't git over the idea that nice folks like Mis' Greenleaf be losin' all the money we make," said Billy thoughtfully. "That be the mean part of it," agreed Cap'n Ezra. "Don't no one hate war wus 'en I do. But Great Britain crowded us into it, an' there ain't but one way to win it. Ez long ez she stays afloat, the *Polly* be going to tear at the gizzards of British shippin'."

Next day the *Polly* captured a Newfoundland schooner, deep-laden with a season's catch of salt fish; and after a long stern chase, overhauled a brigantine Liverpool-bound with a cargo of salt pork, hams, and cheese sorely needed by hungry England. Then for two days they tacked back and forth across the northern ship lane like a panther prowling through forests, hunting for his kill.

On the third morning, the lookout roared the good news. "Sail-ho—dead ahead." Eben Starbuck had to climb almost to the crosstrees before he could focus his glass on the tiny speck of white on the horizon. After a long time, he came down and joined Cap'n Ezra in the stern. "Looks like a big one. Full-rigged an' carryin' a lot o' canvas," he reported. "Might be a frigate. Comin' right at us—prob'lly bound for Halifax or the Saint Lawrence."

Cap'n Ezra's brow furrowed in deep thought, his eyes



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half shut and his shaved upper lip sucked in between his teeth. "There'll be plenty time to run away if it be a frigate," he muttered half aloud. Suddenly his face lighted and his eyes sparkled. "Take soundings," he ordered briskly. The lead was cast. "Twelve fathom," called the sailor. "Jest as I thought," said Cap'n Ezra. "We be over the Grand Banks. S'prisin' there ain't fishin' boats in sight. Heave to under double-reefed for'sl an' jib, Eben. We be goin' to do some fishin'."

Eben Starbuck looked puzzled for a minute and then grinned. "I git the idea, Cap'n." The topsails were sent down and the big mainsail lowered. The foresail was reefed until it caught just enough wind to keep the *Polly* pointing into the wind. "Better close them gun ports and cover up the guns," suggested Cap'n Ezra. From even a mile away, the *Polly* would now look like an innocent fishing boat at anchor, minding its own business.

"Might ez well do some real fishin' 'stead of jest purtendin'," suggested Cap'n Ezra. "Cod steak'll taste good for a change." Soon half the crew had lines over the side and a hogshead began to fill with flopping cod.

By noon, the hull of the oncoming ship was visible from the deck whenever the *Polly* sidled over the crest of a wave. Cap'n Ezra reluctantly stopped fishing and he and Eben Starbuck kept their glasses glued on the ship. "Wish't she'd veer off a mite so we could git a good look at the side," complained Eben Starbuck. "If it's a frigate, we'll have to be movin' in half an' hour."

The ship got closer and closer—five miles—three miles; but the *Polly* still bobbed idly in the swell, almost under bare poles. At last Eben Starbuck heaved a sigh of relief.



## *Cap'n Ezra, Privateer*

"Thank goodness! At least she ain't a frigate. But she carries a big crew and mounts six guns on a side. Pointin' 'bout a mile to the south of us."

"Better have six of the men put on their old duds an' send the rest below," ordered Cap'n Ezra. "You lads take off your blue coats if you want to stay on deck," he said to Dave and Billy. He and the mates pulled yellow slickers over their uniforms. "Keep a little headway on her, Eben, an' drift south 'thout appearin' to."

On came the great ship in a brisk tail wind—a vast cloud of canvas—indifferent to the little schooner. "There be somethin' familiar 'bout that ship," exclaimed Cap'n Ezra suddenly. "By cracky! It be the *Merrimack*—Mis' Greenleaf's ship what the British stole in 1809," he yelled. "It sure be," gasped Eben Starbuck. Cap'n Ezra's face turned hard as granite. "I'll take that ship now if we have to shoot the sticks out of her."

When the *Merrimack* was almost abeam, less than half a mile to the south, the *Polly* suddenly came to life. Her deck swarmed with sailors. Sail after sail shot up. Guns were uncovered and gun ports opened. She heeled over under the impact of the wind and raced at the ship's stern. There was wild confusion on the *Merrimack*'s deck. A red-faced captain dashed about the quarter-deck, roaring commands. Sailors off watch piled up from the forecastle. Guns were loosened, but there was a delay getting up powder and shot. Mates raved and herded the men around with drawn cutlasses.

The *Polly* dashed under the stern half a furlong from the ship. "Heave-to and lower your colors or I'll rake ye," yelled Cap'n Ezra. The captain of the *Merrimack* howled



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back curses and shouted more orders to his mates. Slowly the ship turned towards the south. "Tryin' to git your broadside to bear, be ye?" snarled Cap'n Ezra. "We'll have to give ye a lesson." The *Polly* swung smartly, hanging onto the ship's stern like a terrier. "Shoot high, Eben—don't hit her below the waterline. Let her have it." The four guns of the *Polly*'s broadside roared and splinters flew from the stern of the ship. The Long Tom boomed a heavy shot into the ship's vitals. Muskets blazed from the *Polly*'s deck. The sailor at the *Merrimack*'s wheel ducked and raced forward, the raving captain swinging at him with a cutlass as he passed. The *Polly* was so close that those on her deck could hear the mates arguing with the captain, who seemed to have gone completely mad, and tried to drive his mates from the quarter-deck with his cutlass. There was a scuffle and the captain was overpowered. Then the colors came down with a rush and the *Merrimack* hove to.

The *Polly* nosed alongside in the lee of the ship towering above her, and sailors leaped aboard from the shrouds and made fast. Armed with pistols and cutlasses, the *Polly*'s crew boarded the *Merrimack*. There was no resistance, the captive crew having thrown cutlasses and muskets in a heap on the deck and seeming glad that the trouble was over. On the quarter-deck, two mates still held the raging captain.

Eben Starbuck went up to the struggling group. "'Fraid'll have to clap ye in irons, Cap'n," he said mildly. "Ye be kinda vi'lent to be let runnin' loose. Don't blame ye for gittin' peevish, but we kain't take no chances." Two sailors came at his call and tied up the captain, still de-



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fiant. "If these mutinous rats hadn't been yellow," he fumed, "I'd a fought ye clear to Halifax."

"Come on, lads, let's rummage the Cap'n's cabin an' look at his papers," said Eben Starbuck to Dave and Billy. They dropped down the companion and entered the cabin. It was littered with furniture smashed by the *Polly*'s broadside. Eben Starbuck found the ship's manifest and studied it. "Awful rich cargo," he muttered. "Woolens, boots, hardware, an' all kinds of English goods. Ain't time to figger it up, but we jest got to git this ship down to Boston."

Back on deck, the *Merrimack*'s crew was rounded up. There were thirty in all. Six were Americans who had spent a year in Dartmoor prison in England, having been captured on a brig that was trying to slip through the blockade of a French port, and who had shipped on the *Merrimack* when released, hoping to desert in Halifax. They were glad to help sail the ship to Boston, but the rest of the crew were herded over the side into the *Polly*'s hold. Eben Starbuck rejoined Cap'n Ezra on the *Polly* to decide what was to be done.

"It'll take half the *Polly*'s crew to man that ship, an' we be down to the fourth mate on 'count o' detachin' three prize masters," said Cap'n Ezra thoughtfully.

"You'd better captain her, Eben. I'll convoy ye into Boston with the *Polly*. Have to 'point Dave and Billy ez mates of the *Polly*, for you'll need the fourth mate to help run the *Merrimack*. I figger the two ships kin fight off anythin' smaller'n a sloop o' war. Ain't nothin' goin' to re-capture Belle Greenleaf's ship 'thout fightin' for it."

Eben Starbuck picked out a crew of men who had sailed



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on square riggers and took command of the *Merrimack*. The *Polly* cast off and the two ships made sail for Boston, Dave and Billy proudly handling the *Polly* under Cap'n Ezra's watchful care.

They had one bad scare on the second day, when a warship loomed up out of the early morning haze hardly a mile away, but it turned out to be the American sloop-of-war, *Wasp*, which the boys had seen at Portsmouth. The *Polly* sailed within hailing distance and reported the capture of the *Merrimack*. The *Wasp* kept them company during the day, which was a comfort; and the following afternoon, they picked up Boston Light and the *Polly* led her prize triumphantly up the harbor, both anchoring side by side. It was too late to land, so everything was snugged down for the night, and the captain and new mates of the *Polly* relaxed in the cabin.

"Does the *Merrimack* still belong to Mis' Greenleaf?" asked Billy eagerly. "She sure do," said Cap'n Ezra. "We ain't never admitted England's right to seize our ships, so condemnation by British courts don't mean nothin'. The *Merrimack* be Belle Greenleaf's ship ez much ez she wuz the day she wuz launched. The cargo be diff'runt. That be the *Polly*'s prize—an' 'cordin' to Eben, it be 'bout the richest prize a privateer ever took. But, anyhow, Belle Greenleaf be fixed comfortable fur the rest of her life."



# Blackbeard

By ANNE MALCOLMSON

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U NLIKE most men, who make themselves as handsome as they can, Captain Edward Teach made himself frightful. For Captain Teach was a pirate, and he wanted to look the part. His long, silky dark beard, braided into pigtails and tied with little bows, was looped around his ears. Because of it he was known on the high seas as Blackbeard.

His clothes were brightly colored. At his waist he wore a gay sash, stuck through with three pairs of old pistols. Under the broad brim of his pirate hat he wore a row of matches. Whenever he met an enemy, he lit them. In their dancing light, his black eyes snapped horribly and his ugly grin made fearful patterns of shadow. He looked like something out of a nightmare.

Blackbeard liked to play jokes and then to sit back and laugh until he cried. In his own eyes he was very funny. No one else thought so, however, not even his own wild crew. Although they laughed when he did, they didn't care much for his sense of humor. They recalled too well the time he shot his bos'n, Israel Hands, in the knee. The



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poor bos'n, who had to spend the rest of his life hobbling around on a wooden leg, didn't see the joke. Teach, however, considered it extremely funny. "I'm not a bad fellow, after all, boys. What's a little prank between friends?" he roared, holding his sides as Israel stumbled away.

The people of the Southern colonies didn't care for his sense of humor, either. When he swooped down on a sea-side farm, stole the cattle, and burned the barn, it was hard for the farmer to see the joke. When his crew roared into a village, shooting their pistols into the air and frightening the villagers out of their wits, the villagers didn't think they were funny at all. From Georgia to Virginia Blackbeard's "little jokes" were feared and hated.

At last the people of the colonies had enough. They wrote a long letter to the King, telling him of their troubles with the pirates. The King promised to do what he could. Unfortunately, the Royal Navy was weak. England and France had just finished fighting a war, and the King had few ships left with which to punish the sea-robbers. They were almost as strong as the Navy.

Instead of sending out a fleet of ships to wipe the pirates off the seas, the King sent out a warning. He said he would forgive the sea-robbers, if each and every one of them would promise to be good. They could not all, of course, come to London to take the oath to the King in person. They could make their promises to the royal governors of the royal colonies.

Blackbeard saw the notice and sailed up the coast to North Carolina. Here he got down on his knees before his old friend, Governor Eden. He placed his hand over his heart and swore that he would become an honest man. Governor Eden gave him a big sheet of paper with the



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royal seal on it. It told the world that Blackbeard had been pardoned for his crimes. Then the two men shook hands. History doesn't say so, but they must have winked at each other as they did it.

All the people of the colonies cheered when they heard that Teach would stop playing his jokes on them. But they cheered too soon. As he left the governor, Blackbeard met a merchantman, the *Great Allen*. She was bringing supplies badly needed in the colonies. "Ah-ha!" roared Teach, lighting the matches under his hat. "Let's have some fun, boys! Here we go!" With that his ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, opened fire. The next thing anyone heard of the *Great Allen* was the story of its wretched crew. Teach had marooned them on a rocky island and burned their ship. He was up to his old tricks again.

Before long Blackbeard had gathered a regular fleet of ships. Beside the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, he had the *Adventure*. This was a smaller ship he captured from an English captain. It was a fast, sturdy little boat. He took its captain prisoner and put Israel Hands in charge of it. Perhaps he felt sorry for his joke on the bos'n.

In the Bahamas he met another pirate, Major Bonnet. Bonnet was a weak man, as pirates go. He was no match for the mighty Captain Teach. When Teach offered to make him his partner, he was delighted. There was a catch in the offer, however. Poor Major Bonnet spent the rest of his career moping in his cabin and walking the deck unhappily, doing nothing. Blackbeard put another man in charge of his ship and made Bonnet practically a prisoner.

With his three ships, Blackbeard felt perfectly safe to play jokes whenever he pleased. The Royal Navy could do nothing about it. Once a man-o'-war was sent after



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him. The pirate only laughed, lit the matches under his hat, drew up his ships for battle, and scared the man-o'-war back into harbor.

His pranks became worse and worse. There was nothing he didn't dare to do. Once, after a battle with other pirates, he needed medicine to heal his men's wounds. His ships were full of gold and booty with which he might have bought what he wanted. But that wouldn't have been much fun for him.

He sailed up the coast until he reached the harbor of Charleston in South Carolina, the richest city in the Southern colonies. Governor Johnson was the bitterest of Teach's enemies. Even so, the pirate sent him a message demanding supplies.

Governor Johnson sputtered. Send supplies to Blackbeard? Certainly not! Right now in the harbor, a ship was making ready to sail for England. On board was a member of the City Council. He carried the governor's message, asking for more help from the King to wipe the pirates off the face of the earth. Send supplies to Blackbeard? Indeed not! Arrest him instead!

When Captain Teach learned that the governor wouldn't give him what he wanted, he only laughed. He thought of a good prank he could play this time.

The Charleston harbor was big and broad, but it had only one narrow opening into the sea. Through this had to pass all the ships coming from and going into the city. Blackbeard drew up his little fleet outside this gateway. One by one the English ships sailed out of the harbor. One by one Blackbeard captured them all. He made prisoners of the passengers and the crews and placed his own men in charge of the ships.





Blackbeard looked like something out of a nightmare



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Among the prisoners was the member of the Council with his message to the King. When Teach saw the message he was tickled even more. He threw back his head and roared. He clapped the poor councilor on the back with a clap that sent him sprawling.

As soon as the Charleston harbor was empty and all the ships were tied up outside, Teach sent his men into the town. They shot their pistols into the air and kicked the people on the shins. They swaggered through the streets up to the governor's palace, where once again they gave the governor Blackbeard's message. "Medicine and supplies, and be quick about it."

Governor Johnson did more than sputter this time. He called a meeting of the Council. They sent messengers into the countryside to beg for help against the pirates. But they got little help. Most of the colony's soldiers were off fighting Indians. They sent to North Carolina for help. Here they got none at all. Governor Eden was Teach's old friend. He alone thought his friend's joke was funny.

At last Governor Johnson and the Council had to admit that they were licked. They had no ships nor men with which to fight. Furthermore, they knew that they were in danger. If they didn't give up the supplies, the pirates would turn their guns on the city and send their prisoners to Davy Jones's locker. With heavy hearts the councilors handed over their chests of medicine.

Blackbeard's eyes sparkled with joy when he saw his men returning with the chests. He didn't care much about the medicine, but he thought this the best joke he had ever played.

As soon as the supplies had been put aboard, Teach set his prisoners free. First he kissed all the ladies, and robbed



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all the men of their money. He nearly split with laughter when he took the governor's letter to the King from the angry councilor. Then he sent the captured ships and their passengers back into Charleston Harbor and sailed away.

All the years that Blackbeard had been sailing the seas he had had no home. Now that he was a very rich man, he began to think that it would be fun to have a fine house and to go about in society. He knew that Governor Eden was his friend, so he went to North Carolina to settle down.

His men weren't very pleased at the idea. When they complained that they had no wish to settle down with him, he played another of his tricks. He landed them on an island in Topsail Inlet. Then with a few of his favorites he slipped back aboard the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. "Boom!" roared his cannon as it fired into one of the empty ships. "Boom! Boom!" Again and again it roared until all his fleet, except the *Revenge*, had sunk to the bottom of the inlet. The men rushed to the shore to see what was going on. They could hardly believe their eyes when they saw their captain sailing out into the ocean, leaving them behind. They were marooned with no food; Teach was gone with all their riches.

With his favorites he found a hiding place in another inlet, Ocracoke by name. Here he built himself a fine estate. He bought himself fashionable clothes and a handsome carriage. He trimmed his beard and learned to dance. From the looks of him, as smooth as any dandy, no one would have known that he was the same wild sea-robber who lit matches under his hat to frighten his enemies.

The governor's plantation was not far away. Before long the pirate was an important man in the colony. The



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other colonists hated him; but the governor was his friend. The two men gave each other rich presents. Soon Blackbeard was invited to the governor's balls. All the pretty ladies had to dance with him. If they refused the governor became angry.

You might think that he would have been satisfied with his fine new life. But not Teach! He still liked to play jokes. Now and then he put on his old pirate's dress, gathered his crew, and slipped out to sea. He was still the robber, looking for treasure and sending ships to the bottom. But now he shared his sense of humor with the governor. Whenever an angry shipowner complained and tried to have Teach brought to the law, Governor Eden pardoned the pirate. Blackbeard was grateful and made governor Eden still more presents.

At last the colonists could stand it no longer. They knew that their own governor would never help them. He was almost as bad as Blackbeard. So they wrote a letter to Governor Spotswood of Virginia, who agreed to help them.

First Governor Spotswood offered a big reward. To anyone who could capture Blackbeard himself, he promised five hundred pounds of gold. For each of the pirate's officers, he promised fifteen pounds, and for each of the men, ten pounds.

This was not all he did, however. Secretly he fitted up two men-o'-war, the *Lyne* and the *Pearl*. He called together his bravest officers and from them picked two, Captain Brand and Lieutenant Maynard, to take charge of the ships. They picked their crews from the best men in the colony.

Silently the two Virginia ships slipped into Ocracoke



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Inlet. The officers hoped to take Blackbeard by surprise. When they reached the pirate's fine plantation, however, he was waiting for them. His friend, Governor Eden, had sent him warning. From the walls of the little fortress Blackbeard's cannon looked them in the face. Blackbeard himself was standing on the dock, his hands on his hips, enjoying his new joke. To show the Virginians that he had no hard feelings, he invited them to dinner. He had a grand feast prepared for them. When the meal was over he held up his wineglass and offered a toast to their health and good luck.

No sooner had the Virginia officers returned to their ship than Teach's cannon roared and the fight was on. But this time the joke was on Blackbeard. He had not counted on their courage. The battle raged for hours. The pirates on the shore and the Virginians on their ships gave each other shot for shot.

When at last the smoke was cleared away, Blackbeard was dead. All his pirates had been killed except poor old Israel Hands. The Virginians gathered up the treasure which the robbers had hidden away. They loaded it into the holds of the *Pearl* and the *Lyne*, to take it back to their governor, who had promised to return it to the real owners. They took with them Blackbeard's body, to prove that he was really dead. Poor old Bos'n Hands was allowed to go free. He had had enough punishment from the pirate himself.

When Governor Spotswood announced Blackbeard's capture, all the colonists except Governor Eden rejoiced. This time they knew that they were rid of Captain Edward Teach and his sense of humor for good and all.



# Back to Treasure Island

By HAROLD A. CALAHAN

---

“THE BAR silver and the arms still lie, for all that I know where Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for all of me. Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island—”

It was thus I completed the narrative of our adventures on Treasure Island little more than three years ago. At that time, it truly did not seem possible that any set of circumstances could contrive to make me set sail again for any spot which I so cordially hated and dreaded. But at that time I had not realised the blessing of riches, nor had I seen my wealthy and affluent friends suddenly impoverished.

So back we went.

\* \* \*

One night as we were running out of the trades, Ben Gunn approached me on deck and told me I was wanted by the Squire in the cabin. When I arrived there, I found the Squire and the Doctor and Captain Gray seated around



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the large swinging table on which stood a bottle of wine and some glasses.

“We have sent for you, Jim” began the Squire, “because it is time we discussed our plan of action when we reach the island. But before we begin, I want you all to note the hiding place of the chart. Some accident might befall me—” and, so saying, he took a knife from the table and pried out a piece of panelling on the starboard side near the deck, disclosing a space between the ribs of the schooner, and drew out the chart. He spread it upon the table and we all gathered around.

I had a queer feeling when I saw it. I recalled vividly the last scene of that momentous evening long ago in the Squire’s library at the Hall when first we broke the seals that had been put on with the aid of Billy Bones’s thimble. The same yellowed paper, with its latitude, longitude, soundings and bearings, the sinister-looking island with its three tall hills and two landlocked harbours, and the three red crosses where the treasure had been buried.

\* \* \*

“The bar silver is in the north cache; you can find it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it.”

\* \* \*

“Now,” said the Captain at breakfast the next morning. “I care not how long you search for that treasure. We have a ship under us and means to get away and bear the treasure with us and ye find it. But a few men can search as well as many. Leave me the bulk of the crew, for we



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are not yet dried out. We must heave overboard the spoiled stores, load water, overhaul the gear, mend that hole Jim chopped in her topsides, and kill some goats ere ever we are ready for sea. Furthermore, we must go in on the flood today and pick up those anchors we warped off with. It is a good fortnight's work for all hands. Ye cannot take the boat as I will need it."

"I too," said Dr. Livesey. "Trclawney, I fear I cannot hunt that treasure with you. Silver needs me pretty badly. I doubt if he survives to decorate a gallows."

So it was decided that Squire Trelawney, Ben Gunn and I would go back to Foremast Hill with food, drink, blankets, muskets, an axe, a pick and shovel, and the chart and compass, prepared to stay as long as might be necessary to find the black crag with the face on it. In an hour we had been landed on the western side of the swamp, and, heavily laden, began the long hard march to the northern end of the island. Perforce we went slowly and the day was far spent ere we arrived at the southern side of Foremast Hill.

"Squire," I said, "if it please you, Sir, I would be far more comfortable in my mind if we camped in more pleasant surroundings. I have a memory of this spot that would fill my sleep with nightmares."

"And as for me," echoed Ben Gunn, "askin' yer pardon, Squire, and no offence, the sight o' them graves fair gives me the creeps."

"Why, with all my heart," answered the Squire. "We have plenty of time; we are in no danger. Let us be comfortable. What say you to that spot on the plateau where you rejoined us, Jim? That should bring a pleasant mem-



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ory. There's the stream for drinking and washing and a fallen tree to furnish us with a chair. I confess that at my age and weight, I like to sit on something other than the ground."

So, weary though we were, we climbed to the plateau and made camp. It was a pleasant spot. The fallen tree was nearly three feet in diameter but it was deeply imbedded in the ground. Beside it, the stream ran so close that the tree itself literally formed one bank of the stream.

We were far too exhausted to search for the treasure that day, but we made a good supper, built a comforting fire, and bedded down in our blankets on soft berths of pine needles.

On the morrow, we awoke betimes, bathed in the stream, breakfasted, then sat the while the Squire and Ben Gunn enjoyed a pipe.

Suddenly I was struck by a strange notion. While I bathed, I had walked along the stream to the end of the fallen tree. I had noted the shape of it and the shape of the stump as well, but they had impressed their forms on my memory without in the least causing me to wonder. Now, of a great suddenness, I saw the significance of it all.

"Squire," I cried, "this tree did not *fall* down. It was *chopped* down!"

"What of it, Jim?" he asked.

"But who would chop down a tree like this on a deserted island?"

"Pirates, I suppose."

"But why? Not for fire-wood. It's too big. Not for lumber, because it wasn't and couldn't be carried away. Who could have chopped it down but Flint? And he did





"Do ye note how the stream follows it?" asked Ben Gunn



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it, you may be sure, to guide him back to the treasure."

Squire Trelawney jumped to his feet.

"By jove, Jim, I do believe you have hit on something. Come let us examine it."

The end of the trunk clearly showed axe marks. Near-by, the conical-topped stump showed the corresponding marks. To chop down that giant tree had involved heavy labour. But its purpose quite escaped me.

"Do ye note how the stream follows it?" asked Ben Gunn, pointing. "Could it be for to change the course of the stream?"

The Squire fairly shouted, "You've hit it, Ben. That must have been the purpose and no other. Come, let us study out how the stream ran before it was turned!"

We had not far to seek. About midway of the fallen tree, the rivulet changed its course to follow the direction of the trunk. Then we noted that the trunk had not, as we first thought, embedded itself in the ground, but the earth had been heaped up against it. At the point where the stream turned, a deep gully ran straight to the brow of the cliff. Clearly it was the ancient path of the stream.

"Squire," I cried, "let us turn this stream back into its old bed. See! If we chop through the trunk at this point, it will flow as it did before it was turned."

We fell to work. The chopping was hard, yet easier than I expected, for the tree, though big, had rotted. The axe flew. Then, with pick and shovel, we cleared out the remaining obstruction and the stream burst through.

"Now," cried the Squire, "let us go down and search for the black crag with the face on it. And I will wager my share of the treasure it lies where flowed that waterfall."



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We lost no time but ran stumbling madly to the ravine and down to the glade where the pirates had camped. Water was still trickling feebly down its old course while a lusty new fall was gathering strength some forty feet away. Beneath the feeble stream, we could detect a rock, mostly black but flecked with white.

Then the last of the water fell and we beheld the most ghastly face in the world. Against the background of the shiny black crag, the features stood out with startling whiteness. The two eyes were made of grinning human skulls. The nose was formed of the trunks of two human skeletons placed one above the other, the ribs curving to give it shape. Beneath, a mouth was outlined with four human thigh bones. All the bones were wedged firmly into natural crevices in the rock.

“We’ve found it,” murmured the Squire, but all the elation was gone from his voice. We stood in awe of that terrible sight. Here were the remains of the last two of Flint’s helpers. All six had been slaughtered and their bones used as landmarks to point to buried treasure.

Later, when I found opportunity to examine the crag more carefully, I discovered that the rock above overhung it by so much that the water-fall leapt clear of the bones. Otherwise it would surely have dislodged them. .

“Ten fathoms south,” said the Squire in business-like tones. “I step three feet. Twenty of my paces should be close to ten fathoms. And we need not be very accurate. That much silver should cover a lot of ground by all accounts.”

He walked to the foot of the crag, and, holding the compass, stepped off twenty paces. His last step was in



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the very centre of the ashes of the fire the pirates had built.

"There they was," said Ben Gunn, "right on top o' the treasure and never knowed it."

We fell to digging, rapidly at first, then more slowly, then frantically as hope alternated with despair. Two of us worked while the third rested. Our hands blistered but w^ minded it not. And then the pick, which I was wield-ing at the time, struck something solid.

"Here, Squire!" I cried, "dig here!"

He thrust the shovel deep into the spot I indicated and he too struck something hard. Two scoops with the shovel and there lay a huge bar of dirty black metal. It did not look like silver to me.

"What is it? Iron?" I asked fearfully.

"Silver!" cried the Squire. "Bar silver; only tarnished from being in the ground."

Soon we had uncovered enough to realise that bars of silver lay close packed and evenly ranged for many feet in all directions, and that the pile was evidently several feet thick. My elation was unbounded; but with the Squire, reaction had set in. All the worry, danger, and fatigue he had stood so well now seemed to come upon him in a heap.

"Come, come," he said, "we have found it. The rest is easy. Ben, do you go back and fetch the ship. Have the Captain make haste and bring her around to the North Inlet. Tell him to have a care not to run her aground. There are but two fathoms depth shown in the chart. Here, don't go off without the chart. He'll need it. Jim and I will guard the treasure."



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I cannot to this day see the need for our caution. On the entire island there were but two living foes and they so crippled with wounds that they could not move. Yet we guarded that treasure as if we were beset with enemies. We moved our camp down to the very edge of the hole we had dug and there we kept our vigil.

At noon of the following day, I climbed halfway up Foremast Hill and saw the Hispaniola standing off and on outside the entrance to North Inlet. But it lacked three hours of high tide and I judged the Captain would wait at least two hours before attempting the passage. As I watched I saw the gig put off and pull toward the cove. Some one aboard could control his patience no longer. I scrambled down the hill to break the news to the Squire.

A half hour later, Dr. Livesey joined us.

"Ah, Jim!" he cried, "you are the hero, even to this. Ben told me it was you who found the clue. Just as it was you who did every last blessed thing to bring this voyage to a successful close. Trelawney, I've left Silver in Diana's care," he went on. "She is well enough now to hobble around on Silver's crutch. And I've shown her how to change his bandages, and left them food and water. And now let's have a look at this treasure."

The labours of the next three weeks were arduous in the extreme. But as I look back upon it all, I think our work was well organised. Fortunately the treasure was only about half a mile from the cove whence it was carried in the gig to where the Hispaniola was anchored inside the entrance to North Inlet.

The first few days were devoted to preparation for the transportation of the many tons of precious metal. A path-



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way was first smoothed through the pine woods. In spots rocks were removed, hillocks smoothed off and hollows filled. For most part the way lay over a thick carpet of slippery pine needles, and we carried hundreds of baskets of the needles to cover the bare spots. Then, under Gray's direction, we constructed a half dozen sledges with traces and harness of rope which a man could drag easily over the slippery needles provided they were not overloaded.

A derrick with mast, boom, guys and blocks and tackle was set up beside the treasure to aid in lifting the bars out of the ground. A small dock, long enough to reach the gig at low tide, was built and fitted with the davits of the jolly boat to aid in lowering the bars and stowing them properly. The gig was fitted with a mast, sail, and lee-boards, and whenever the wind served, the journeys to and from the ship were made under sail.

At the ship, the mainsail was unlaced from its gaff, and a block and tackle were hung from the peak so that the mainmast and gaff formed a derrick for unloading the silver from the gig and lowering it into the main hold. Later we built platforms that fitted into the gig. They were equipped with chain bridles so that the platforms with their precious loads were lifted out easily with the gaff derrick. It was most necessary to save time and effort at the final loading of the ship as there we were most likely to lose some of the silver overboard especially when the wind was in the northeast and a sea running.

Ben Gunn and Dick were set to the task of shooting and bringing in goats, much to Dick's displeasure. It was plain that he wished most of all to spend his spare time on the ship and away from the island.



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Every few days the Doctor would take his kit and visit Silver. It was a long tiresome journey of some eight miles from the shore of North Inlet to the old anchorage and back, but the Doctor never complained. At end of the first week, he took two seamen with him and they built a litter and carried the wounded man to the block-house, with Diana hobbling after them on Silver's crutch. They cut the crutch down to fit her.

"Silver will live," said the Doctor after his next visit, "which makes a nice problem for us. What to do with him is hard to tell."

"Why, take him back to the gallows, of course," blustered the Squire.

"I'm not so sure," answered Dr. Livesey and let it go at that.

It was very pleasant aboard the Hispaniola in the evenings that followed our hard days of labour. The calm and quiet of the anchorage, the sense of security, and the knowledge that each day the ship floated lower in the water from the treasure in her hold combined to make us a merry crew.

\* \* \*

When the last of the treasure was below hatches, we held a meeting in the cabin to decide its disposition. We came quickly to an agreement. Then the Captain called a meeting of the entire ship's company.

The Squire stood at the break of the poop and thus addressed the men:

"Lads, the treasure we sought is safely stowed, and as soon as we have watered, we set sail for merry England. I want to say not only for myself but for Captain Gray,



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Dr. Livesey, and Master Hawkins, that no ship has ever sailed with a truer, more steadfast, more courageous crew than the Hispaniola. But lest these words seem empty, I will now declare your rewards.

"Just what the value of this treasure may be is hard to estimate, but unless silver has lost its value, it is very great indeed. First of all, Master Hawkins, whose private fortune financed the voyage, is to be reimbursed in full. All you men and the Captain will receive full wages up to the time of your discharge.

"Then the remainder will be divided into lays. Master Hawkins, Dr. Livesey, and I, as organizers of the expedition, will each receive twenty lays. Captain Gray will receive five lays. Benjamin Gunn, for his special services and invaluable aid will also receive five lays. Dick, for his courage in rescuing Master Hawkins, will receive two lays. Every other man will receive one lay. And let me tell you that one lay will enable each of you to retire from the sea and live in ease and plenty for the rest of your life."





# Mutineers Be Hanged

By JOHN F. HINTERNHOFF



**M**IDSHIPMEN GORHAM AND TRIMBLE, being in disgrace on board, were in no hurry to get back to their ship. Besides, after months at sea they were hungry for news of the war; 1814 was a fateful year. The Bin-nacle Inn on Charleston's waterfront was a good place to await the arrival of the stage from the north. The boys sat in their uniforms, blue topside and white below, at the back of the porch.

Loungers on the porch steps were watching a ship's jolly boat moving out to the moorings. Without telescopes they could still make out the figures of the men in the sternsheets, one small and elderly, wearing a cocked hat of antique fashion, the other huge and black-bearded. As the interval of water widened a few took the trouble to raise glasses to their eyes and continue their idle observation. Most dozed.

The boys talked in low tones. "Of course I shared the blame, Joe," said Jason Gorham, "if I had been at hand when Packer assumed authority to strike jib against orders



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I'd have beaten Assembly on his pate with a belaying pin. The man's a troublemaker and the others obey him because he is cock of the foc'sle. Even if the captain is opposed to corporal punishment and has practiced his preaching since the Revolution he would have been sorely tempted himself under the circumstances. And after all, all you did was let Packer have a coil of rope at the back of his neck."

"Aye, aye," said Joe gloomily, "but hereafter I'll stick to the captain's method. I'll. . . ."

The groan of wheels on the cobblestones, and the stage came into view. Jchu up on the box drove with his gaze on the water while the horses came to a stop before the inn. The driver braked the wheels automatically and without taking his eyes from the water clambered to the ground, ignoring the greetings of the men on the porch.

"A glass," he said putting a hand over his shoulder. Several were offered at once. He trained the instrument on the departing jolly boat for almost a minute and as he lowered it all voices began clamoring for news.

"Washington City fell," he said coolly, "and the capital is burned. They beat the British off at Baltimore. Landlord, did you get a good look at the big man with the black beard in the boat yonder? Did you see him close to?"

"Yes, indeed," answered the aproned man. "He was my guest here for the past two days. He signed as mate on a private armed schooner in my parlor this morning and he and her captain, Jibboom Strawbridge, the little man with the long nose, are going aboard now."

"Which ship is she?"

"There she lies." The innkeeper pointed. "Far out. She



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anchored at ebbtide, *Carolyn* her name is, black above the water line."

Up went all the glasses, Joe Trimble nudged his colleague and Jason pricked up his ears.

"My, ain't she pretty. Virginia built, I reckon, and pierced for ten guns. I hear she's unlucky. Took an English merchant brig off Guinea and lost her in a storm. Prize crew and two officers drowned, every man. That's all she has to show for nine months' privateering cruise. Her skipper is an old Navy man."

The coach driver's voice cut off the remarks. "Ha," he barked. "Landlord, if the *Carolyn*'s new mate had been my guest I'd be a rich man today. That is if he has foreign lookin' marks tattooed on each finger and his left ear is cut most in two like a cutlass done it and another scar over the left eye and he talks low with his eyes on the ground and, when he shouts he has a foretop bellow you could hear across the harbor. Then he's worth a thousand dollars to the State of North Carolina. Ha! And he's usually got a young whelp with him that's as bad as he is but never got caught so ain't worth nothin'. Pity." He looked at the men who had been nodding in confirmation of all the points of his description. "Then you let Thacker Briscoe sail off for some more devilment. Ha! Well, it's like some folks say, 'Scratch a privateer and you find a pirate.' Bad luck for a spell. Take on a master pirate and recover your losses. Ha."

The landlord shook his head doubtfully. "He behaved mild enough while he stayed here and when Captain Strawbridge came in and said he was seeking an officer I pointed out Mr. Bristol, that was what he called himself. Are you sure?"



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"Ha. Am I sure? Didn't I see them try and convict him on the evidence of more than a hundred witnesses on charges of settin' false lights to draw coastin' ships on the rocks and him and his scurvy crew swarmin' over the wrecks like starved rats and takin' everythin' they could carry off and knockin' them that lived after the wreck on their heads all of which against the peace and dignity of the State of North Carolina and setra?"

"Then how come he is at large?"

"The jailer at New Bern would admire to have the answer to that. Ha. They do say that a steel file had somewhat to do with it after all their trouble buildin' a fine gallows for the gentleman outside his cell window and him howlin' like the saw was cuttin' him and they was hammerin' the nails into his head. Ongrateful critter that he is he ups and leaves the night before he was to make his grand appearance. I warrant talk of hangin' is untasty to him since then though. Ha."

There was a puff of smoke and a dull boom from one of the *Carolyn's* guns. "Calling her liberty men aboard," said someone.

"A thousand dollars, lads," said the coach driver, heavily humorous, "just go aboard the handsome tops'l schooner and take Thacker Briscoe. Ha. A hundred stout pirates would swarm out like wasps."

The men settled themselves more firmly in their seats. The driver said, "Ha."

"Landlord," Joe's voice came loudly from the back of the porch, "can you get us a boat? We wish to go aboard the *Carolyn*."

After an astonished silence the man went to the side of the house and called, "Clovis, gentlemen to be ferried."



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The boys walked over to the landing after a negro who carried a pair of oars, feeling that curious stares followed them. They warned each other with glances not to laugh.

A young man wearing a suit of good sea cloth was standing beside the boat. On one big shoulder he carried a chest and beside him were a pair of dunnage bags. He appeared a year or two older than the midshipmen.

He spoke to the negro. "I'll be hiring this boat."

"Already hiahed, suh," said the boatman.

"I must be put aboard my ship," said the youth in a tone of finality. His small head seemed suddenly to be dyed red with anger. When Jason started to speak he snapped, "I'll take the boat and I want no truck with cabin boys!" He set the chest on one of the thwarts and raised his fists.

Joe was quick to accept the invitation. He brought a heel down hard on the big fellow's toe and stepping back a pace removed his hat and bowed low and drove his head into the blustery one's midriff. The recipient said "Oomp!" and sat down.

The boys and the servant sprang into the boat, chucked the chest onto the landing and cast loose the painter. "Very effective," said Jason as they moved out toward the moorings, "but I doubt that Captain Strawbridge would have approved."

"No," said Joe, ruefully, "and I had made a resolution to stick to his rule the rest of the time I am in his service. Let's make it a pact."

"Agreed," said Jason. "One blow at that surly black-guard, Packer, even though he is a foc'sle troublemaker, and our promotions are postponed another hundred years. Strawbridge fashion for me from now on."

"What do you think of the coachy's yarn about the



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captain's new mate?" asked Joe. "If it's true we will have to stir our stumps and do something."

"I don't doubt it's straight," said Joe. "I recommend you to go to the skipper and say, 'Sir, your mate is gallows' meat,' and jump overboard."

"We'll have to wait our chance to expose him. He'll be off guard some time." By the time the boat reached the side of the *Carolyn* they wore troubled frowns.

Captain Jibboom Strawbridge was standing by the tiller when the boys came aft, the long nose that gave him his nickname pointed aloft at the face of the tall newcomer.

"My young gentlemen, Mr. Briscoe," he said waving his hand. "Since we sail Navy fashion I call them midshipmen." All nodded. "Your nephew will find his association with them pleasant, I trust."

As Joe and Jason walked away they heard the captain saying, "struck a man on watch . . . too young . . . my rule is save the blows for the enemy . . ."

Like a frigate the schooner had no deck houses; all apartments were below. The boys were quartered in a small room adjoining the cabin. They had hardly changed into their work uniforms when the door swung open. Their acquaintance of the inn landing crowded himself and his dunnage through the opening.

None spoke as a pink flush spread over the new midshipman's head as it had on the wharf. The boys saw plainly that the young man was a reproduction of the mate except for the black beard. The unwelcome associate slung a hammock, stowed his chest and bags neatly and left without a word.

"So that's the 'whelp' that the coachman told about.



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Two of 'em, Briscoe and Brisket, eh?" Joe laughed softly.  
"Well, if I had kept my temper reefed we wouldn't have such elegant company and you and I would be acting mates."

"Something's bound to pop," said Jason. They heard the clanking of the anchor cable on deck and the song of the men at the capstan, and raced to their posts.

The mainsail swung for a moment gently as a lady's fan, then, as the steersman brought her up, filled out and the *Carolyn* heeled slightly as she went on a tack. The midshipmen supervised several small jobs on deck. Once during the fastening of the anchors to the rails Jason noticed Packer, the seaman whose disobedience had angered the boys, watching him from under his brows. Jason thought he read malice in the man's glance but soon forgot it.

"Man the braces!" Mr. Briscoe shouted from aft. The men took their posts. The *Carolyn* was brought about handsomely and ran with the wind astern into the open sea. Captain Strawbridge smiled approval and led the way to the cabin for the evening meal.

"I act as my own master at arms," he said without any preliminaries at the table. "I notice that you new gentlemen carry pistols. Officers and men go unarmed on the *Carolyn*. We keep three pistols and loads in this chart table drawer for emergencies. So if you will please hand over your weapons—"

The mate and Brisket exchanged looks of tolerant amusement as they removed their pistols from straps at their chests and passed them over the table. The commander smiled pleasantly and went on in a conversational vein, "All our small arms are here in the cabin; the musket



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chests serve as benches; the pistols are in the small chests by the window; and those canvas sacks contain shot." Jason and Joe watched the black eyes of the newcomers shift from point to point. The talk drifted to other topics.

They were at the end of the meal when someone made a chance remark about the use of the word "ship" in referring to the *Carolyn*. "Of course she is a schooner," said Mr. Jibboom Strawbridge, "but I guess that as with other things the name is loosely applied to all vessels for convenience." The young men who were rising to leave murmured agreement with this explanation.

Joe, nearing the door, turned and gave an example. "Take ducks," he said. "They're all called ducks but some are drakes." The others nodded. He went on deliberately. "And they're all gallows but, if they're built with one upright supporting the arm, they are known as gibbets."

They heard the lantern bail squeak on its hook in the silence. The commander placidly sipped his strong tea. Briscoe turned his eyes down on his plate but the boys saw his hand grip a biscuit till the knuckles were white and the faint marks of gunpowder tattooing showed on them.

For more than a week the *Carolyn* sailed on long leisurely tacks working toward the sea northeast of the West Indies. Not a sail was sighted as she spent days casting about like a bird dog. There was little wind and that little was hot.

An hour before nightfall the foretop lookout called, "Sail ho!"

"Where away?" shouted the captain.

"Two points on the la'board bow, sir."



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Faint as the wind was it carried the *Carolyn* within sighting distance of the other in a short time. She proved to be a lumbering full rigged merchant making a ludicrous attempt to scurry away with everything cracked on. The swift *Carolyn* soon came abeam of her. One of the privateer's guns spoke and a shot skipped over the water before the bow of the stranger. Her men hauled at her fo' braces and hove her to.

A flag ran up to the ship's gaff and the schooner's men made out the five blue shields of Portugal. The captain with Joe and a boat crew climbed over the taffrail into the jolly boat which was lowered smoothly from the stern davits to the water and strode away with the long sweeps of the oars.

On board the *Carolyn* powder and shot were sent up and the guns loaded. Some of the nineteen hands crowded the starboard shrouds to disguise the fact that they were shorthanded while others stood by their guns as the schooner rode the easy swells. The captain could be seen boarding the ship and following a bowing officer into the cabin.

In a few minutes he had re-entered the boat and returned to the *Carolyn*. "She is Portuguese all right," he announced, "all her papers in order and no enemy property aboard." He looked forward and raised his head sharply.

The mate was crouching behind one of the guns training it on the slowly moving Portuguese. Before Mr. Strawbridge could speak Briscoe sprang to one side and touched a lighted linstock to the fuse hole. The six pounder roared and bucked in its tackle. The main top-



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gallant yard of the ship splintered and hung in pieces from its lifts. Jibboom, his mouth set hard in his white face, hurried forward. Briscoe was screaming to the men at the other guns. "Sight the starboard battery!" He sighted another gun with a mad red gleam in his eye.

"Stand clear of that breech, loon," snapped the skipper. The men's eyes met and held but Briscoe lowered his first. The captain stepped upon a pinrail holding to a shroud so that his whole body showed above the bulwarks. He removed his cocked hat and made gestures of apology to the frantic Portuguese until their captain waved his hat in reply and the ship labored away.

"This is a lawful ship of war, Mr. Briscoe," said Mr. Jibboom icily. "Our letters of marque give us authority to attack, capture and subdue British ships. We are not pirates."

Briscoe muttered something about ships under false colors and that poor men couldn't afford to be choosy. Jason noticed that although he kept his gaze lowered he stole a glance aft now and then. The mate continued to mumble and the boy suddenly realized that he seemed to play for time. Jason turned and ran aft. Joe followed.

They saw Brisket come topside through the cabin companion just before they reached it. As Jason had suspected, when they dashed into the cabin they found the drawer of the chart room table broken open.

"The three pistols and loads are gone," said Jason.

"Briscoe and Brisket have them," said Joe, "and they're the only men armed on board. We had better take muskets above with us and get the pistols back."

There were shouts and scuffling above. Joe slipped up



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the companionway and popped his head out and in again like a rabbit. A glimpse and been enough. He barred the entrance and came down.

"All the men are crowded before the foremast," he told Jason. "It's Briscoe, Brisket and that scoundrel Packer. Each has one of the pistols. I warrant they have watched for this chance since they came aboard."

A voice came from the deck. "Come out of there, you two; and come unarmed or Jibboom gets the bullet that's in this pistol."

"Strawbridge method," warned Joe.

The midshipmen looked at each other for a moment, then Jason said, "Throw open the casement, Joe." Joe swung the transom window on its hinges. "Catch hold," commanded Jason taking hold of one end of a musket chest.

Through the opening they heaved the long chest. It floated for a second or two in the white wake then sank. Two more followed. A heavy hand beat on the companion door while they tossed the cutlasses, the pistol chests and the bags of shot overboard. The two dusted their hands, saluted each other approvingly and marched topside.

They were herded forward where the captain stood with his arms folded before the sullen men. Packer was flourishing and fondling his pistol by turns. Joe sang out, "Mr. Strawbridge, all the small arms have been thrown into the sea. The three weapons that those buzzards have are the only ones on the *Carolyn*."

"Excellent," said the skipper, relieved. "You hear that, you scum? If you dare to fire those things expect no mercy from my men. You can destroy just three of us. The rest



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will see that you're tried for treason and mutiny. Hanged twice you might say."

Joe saw Briscoe's sunbaked face pale as much as was possible. Swiftly the boy snatched a rope's end from the fiferail and taking a turn around his own neck pretended to stretch himself vertically, rolling his eyes and gurgling in his throat. The sailors applauded this dismal humor and laughed loudly. Briscoe, who had been about to speak, turned and motioned to Brisket to address the men.

"Lads," said Brisket wheedlingly, "we have taken over this ship to pursue and capture that Portuguee."

"Without muskets and cutlasses?" asked one of the hands.

"It's our bounden duty," continued the younger mutineer, "seeing she's a European ship and no friend of the United States. The war won't last much longer and now's your chance for a prize."

The captain cut in. "Stow that bilge, you young rogue. Lads, what he is proposing is that you turn pirate and attack the ship of a neutral country. Well, Mr. Gallows, we are not having any."

Briscoe had recovered his composure by now. "You'll sail as ballast under the main hatch until you come to your senses then, my bullies." He pointed out a group. "Go aft, you all, and raise the main hatch grating. The rest of you follow single file." He moved as if to shove one of the men.

"Mister," said Captain Strawbridge, "I warn you I'll not be responsible if you touch one of the men. The rest will lay hold of capstan bars and belaying pins and you'll get little good out of your three rounds." He laughed shortly.



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All the loyal men were searched and sent below one by one. At last the grating was closed and the crew stared at one another in the gloom. "Being ranking man," said the captain, "I think I should have the softest timber to rest against." The men chuckled.

"We must be patient, men, and we'll win out. No violence, hear. We will keep in mind that they have only three shots but I don't propose to lose a man. They'll be mighty sick of their bargain soon. You saw the face on Briscoe when I mentioned hanging, didn't you?"

Jason thought that this was a good time to tell what the midshipmen had heard at the inn in Charleston. The men put their heads together and spoke in whispers.

The schooner floundered through the night and in the morning it came on to blow. Briscoe's voice came through the grating. "You, below, if you expect food and water you'll have to work ship. I need nine men."

Some began to shout mockingly but were stopped by the captain. In a few moments he came on deck barefoot and clad only in trousers. The leader of the mutineers did not address a direct command to the old man but when the order was to reef the fore topgallant sail the rightful commander sprang into the shrouds and, bare feet balancing on the footrope, clutched at the stiff canvas with the rest.

Joe was at the tiller when Mr. Strawbridge came aft to flemish down the boat falls. Briscoe in readiness, leaned against the taffrail, watching the work. "Did you know, Mr. Trimble," said the skipper, "that south of the Equator when they flemish down they have to coil the rope in the opposite direction or it would come undone?"

Joe solemnly took the cue. "Yes, indeed, Sir, and when



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the hangmen make their nooses; they make the knot the opposite to our way. Below the Line Jack Ketch takes the standing part of the rope in his left hand—or is it his right? Let's see."

"Now the hangings I've seen—"

"Silence!" bellowed Briscoe.

"Maybe Mr. Briscoe can tell us how the hangman's knot is tied," said the old officer. The mutineer levelled his pistol.

The Captain wagged a warning finger. "No, no, Mister. If you fire that you'll be unarmed between your two trusty mates. That would be an unpleasant situation. Besides, do you want murder added to treason, mutiny and wrecking?" The man's eyes widened and he lowered the muzzle.

The word was passed quickly among the men. "I'll be hanged, you be hanged, this and that be hanged." They seemed obsessed by hanging so often did they mention it.

The course of the *Carolyn* was roughly north as well as the men could guess. In a few days the weather became squally and cold but the men stood their watches cheerfully under the ever threatening firearms. They continued the campaign.

"Sir," Jason would say, "I've heard yarns about the fine executions that are held in the Army forts in New York. A whole regiment ranked about the gallows—the Rogue's March—the roll of the drums when the order is read—and the fiving when it's done. That must be the grandest sort of hanging."

"Forgive me, Mr. Gorham, if I disagree," the captain would reply, "but, at the risk of seeming unpatriotic, I



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must say that the British Navy does such things better. They fire guns as the rogues drop from the yardarms. Yes, "Lad," with a wistful air, "the old Country has us beat in style."

Briscoe's nervousness was infectious. Several times Bris-  
ket and Packer were observed seasick green at the gills.  
The loyal men made greater efforts. It seemed that every  
tire one of them touched a rope end it tied itself into a  
noose, concerning which a loud discussion would start.

One day one of the hands had an inspiration. Noticing  
that Briscoe was below he took a length of lanyard cord  
with a belaying pin in its noosed end and hung it outboard  
on the taffrail. It dangled before the stern window and  
disturbed the meditations of the leader.

He stormed to the deck and found his nephew dawdling  
beside the place where the symbol was fastened. Briscoe  
tore open the front of his coat but as he drew his pistol  
Packer made a wild snatch at the weapon and the ball  
sped out over the water. The mutineer stared stupidly  
from his useless firearm to his nephew who was glaring  
venomously at him. A brass button that had come off  
Briscoe's coat rolled slowly to the lee bulwark. Joe picked  
it up and with a bland expression offered it to the dazed  
man. He gave a great start. The button swayed from the  
end of a thread.

"Below!" he screamed. "Every one below." The men  
went docilely.

None ever knew how the schooner was sailed that day  
and night. They could feel her pitch crazily and right her-  
self only to plunge again. They surmised that all possible



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sail was bent. The hatch was battened down so that they had to guess at the passage of time.

Long hours passed before the captain sensed a change in the sailing. Through all these days without instruments he had calculated positions and speed so that he had a vague idea that they were near a coast. "Lads," he said. The restless men quieted. "The motion of the schooner is strange. She is usually obedient to her tiller and the sea is not very heavy. Feel how she yaws? There's no one at the tiller!"

Some braced the ladder with their backs while others mounted it and heaved at the hatch. The fastenings gave way and they poured out into the foggy dusk.

The jolly boat was gone from the stern and the long boat midships had been stove in. The low steady moan of surf on a smooth beach could be heard to larboard.

Captain Strawbridge ran to the larboard rail and shook his fist toward the land. "Gone!" he shouted. "Run away. And all three rogues hanged a dozen times over."

Joe and Jason, up in the bows, were congratulating each other. "When we're admirals we'll tell them about the mutiny put down Strawbridge fashion—not a blow struck."

"I make it we're off New Jersey," said Mr. Jibboom Strawbridge, "we'll have to claw off and make some easting. Mr. Trimble, take the watch."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Mr. Gorham, you will relieve Mr. Trimble at midnight."



# The Pirates of Charles Town Harbor

By RUPERT SARGENT HOLLAND

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ANTONY EVANS was rowing slowly round the southern point of Charles Town, the bow of his boat pointing out across the broad expanse of water that lay to the east. It was early morning of a bright summer day, and the harbor looked very inviting, the breeze freshening it with little dancing waves of deep blue, tipped with silver, and bringing the salt fragrance of the ocean to the sunlit town. Deep woods ringed the bay; here and there tall, stately palmettos standing out on little headlands, looked like sentries stationed along the shore to keep all enemies away.

Antony loosened his shirt at the throat and rolled his sleeves higher up on his sunburned arms. He had finished school a few days before, and was to have a fortnight's holiday before starting work in his father's warehouse. He loved the water, the two rivers that held his home-town in their wide-stretched arms; the little creeks that wound into the wilderness, teeming with fish and game;



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the wide bay, and the open ocean. His idea of a holiday was to fish or swim, row or sail, and he meant to spend every day of his vacation on the water. In the bow of his boat was a tin box, and in that box were bread and cold meat and cake, and a bottle of milk—his lunch, and possibly his supper too.

Slowly the town receded across the gleaming water. It grew smaller and smaller as Antony watched it from his boat, until it looked to him like a mere handful of toy houses instead of the largest settlement in His Majesty's colony of South Carolina. He half-shut his eyes and rested on his oars, letting the wind and the waves gently rock his boat. Now Charles Town became a mere point, a spot of color on the long, level stretch of green. He opened his eyes and looked over his shoulder at the wide expanse of blue. Then he pulled toward the southern shore, planning to follow it for a time. There would be more shade there as the sun grew warmer.

The depths of the woods looked very cool and inviting as he rowed along close to them. Great festoons of gray moss hung from the boughs of the live-oaks, festoons that were pink or pale lavender where the sun shone on them. He paddled along slowly, letting the water drip from the blades of his oars, until the town had disappeared around the curve of the forest and he was alone with the waves and the trees.

The sun, almost directly overhead, and his appetite, presently suggested to him that it was time for lunch. He chose a little bay with a sandy beach, and running his boat aground, landed, carrying the precious tin box with him. There was a comfortable mossy seat under a big



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palmetto, and here he ate part of his provisions, and then, rolling his coat into a pillow, prepared to take a nap. The air was full of spices from the woods, warm and sleep-beguiling; he had slept an hour before he waked, stretched his rested muscles, and went back to the boat.

He had a mind to do a little exploring along this southern shore. The water was smooth, and he felt like rowing. Rapidly he traveled along the shore, peering into bays and inlets, covering long stretches of thick forest, while the sun made his west-journey, the air grew cooler, and the shade stretched farther across the sea. There would be a moon to see him home again, and he was weatherwise enough to know that he had nothing to fear from the wind.

The sun was almost setting when the rowboat rounded a wooded point and swung into a bay. Antony was following the shoreline, so he did not bother to look around, but pulled steadily ahead, keeping about the same distance from the bank. Then, to his great surprise, a voice directly ahead hailed him. "Look where you're going, son! Ease up a bit on your oars, and you'll get to us without bumping."

He looked around and saw three men fishing from a boat. They must have kept very quiet not to have attracted his attention. He slowed the speed of his boat by dragging his oars in the water, but even so he swept pretty close to the fishermen, and one of them, with a quick turn of his own oar, brought the larger boat side-on to Antony's.

"Pull in your oar," the man ordered. To avoid a collision Antony obeyed. The man caught the gunwale of Antony's boat, bringing the two side by side.

All three of the men were grinning. "Well, now, lad,"



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said the man at the oars, "where were ye bound at such a pacc? Going to row across the ocean or down to St. Augustine? Bound out from Charles Town, weren't ye?"

Antony smiled. "I was doing a little exploring," he answered. "I didn't know there were any fishermen down along here."

The man's grin widened. "Ye didn't, eh? Well, there's quite a lot of us fishermen down along here. Take a look." He gestured over his shoulder with his thumb. Antony turned and saw that at the other end of the bay were a number of boats, men on the beach, and that the hull and spars of a g̃eod-sized ship stood out beyond the trees of the next headland.

The man in the bow of the other boat, a slim, dark fellow with a straggling black mustache, pulled in his fishing-line. "An' now you've done your exploring, you'll make us a little visit. It wouldn't do to go right back to Charles Town to-night." He stood up, and with the agility of a cat stepped from his boat to Antony's and sat down on the stern-seat.

Antony had plenty of nerve, but somehow neither the words of the man at the oars nor the performance of the dark fellow was altogether reassuring. The two men now in the other boat were big swarthy chaps, with many strange designs tattooed on their brawny arms; and the one who sat in the stern wore gilded earrings and had a good-sized sheathknife fastened to his belt. They didn't look like the men he was uscd to seeing about Charles Town.

They weren't disagreeable, however. The man at the oars gave Antony's boat a slight shove, which sent them some distance apart, and then dropped his fishing-line into



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the water again. "See you two later," he said, still grinning. "Keep an eye on the lad, Nick."

Nick sat leaning forward, his arms on his knees, his black eyes twinkling at Antony. "Don't you be feared of this nest," said he. "I don't say that some mightn't well be, but not a lively young limb like you. What's your name?"

Antony told him. "And why might some be afraid?" he asked, his curiosity rising.

"Because," said Nick, "that sloop round the point belongs to old man Teach, and she flies a most on-common flag at her masthead."

"Blackbeard!" exclaimed the boy, his eyes wide with surprise and sudden fear.

"Now don't be scared," said Nick. "Some do call him Blackbeard, but he don't make trouble if he's handled right."

"They said he was down around the Indies, after Spanish ships," said Antony.

"He's been in a good many places," said the other. "Spanish galleys pay well, but trade's trade, wherever you find it."

This Nick was a pleasant fellow, with nothing piratical-looking about him, unless you considered the skull and crossbones tattooed on his right forearm as a sign of his trade. He smiled in a very friendly fashion. "We've got a little matter on hand now that brings us up to Charles Town. Some of the crew's sick, and we want drugs and other things for 'em." He chuckled, as though the notion was amusing. "Pirates get sick just like other folks some-



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times," he added. He pointed to the beach ahead of him.  
"Row us up there, Tony."

There was nothing for Antony to do but obey, and somewhat assured by the mild manner of Nick, he pulled at his oars until the boat grounded in shallow water. "Don't mind a little wetting, do ye?" said Nick, stepping over the side. Antony followed, and they drew the boat high and dry on the shore. "Come along," said Nick, and he turned to lead the way.

Men were working on a couple of overturned skiffs, men were lounging about doing nothing, men who looked nowise different from the fellows Antony saw in his own town. They paid no particular attention to him, and Nick led him along the shore through the woods that covered the headland, and out on the other side. Here was a snug harbor, with a good-sized ship at anchor, men on the shore and more men on the ship's deck.

Nick shoved a small boat into the water, motioned to Antony to climb in, and with a few strokes brought them to the ship's side. He made the boat fast, and climbed a short rope-ladder to the deck. "Don't be scared," he muttered; "he don't eat boys." He led the way to where a stocky man with a heavy black beard sat in a chair smoking a long pipe.

"Here's a lad," said Nick, nodding to the chief, "we picked up as he was rowing down along the coast from Charles Town. He wanted a taste of salt air, and something better to do than what he'd been doing. And we didn't want him to go back home and tell what he'd seen down here."

Blackbeard was certainly black, and there was a scar



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on one side of his face that didn't add to the beauty of his appearance, but he wasn't ferocious-looking, not as fierce in fact as several men Antony knew at home. He puffed at his pipe a minute before he spoke.

"We're going up to the town to-morrow morning," he said. "What's the talk about us there?"

"They thought you were chasing Spanish ships from Cuba and St. Augustine," answered Antony, "and I think they were pretty glad you were doing it."

"They were, eh?" snorted Blackbeard. "That's always the way of it! Fight the enemy and you're a hero, but don't for the love of Heaven come near us. Smooth-faced rascals all! Keep an eye on him, Nick," and he jerked his head to show that the audience was over.

"Not so terrible, was he?" said Nick, as they went aft. "Now I'll show you some folks you know." They came to the window of the cabin, and he indicated that he wanted Antony to look inside. Half a dozen men and a couple of small boys were in the cabin, a most disconsolate-looking lot. To his great surprise Antony recognized the nearest as Mr. Samuel Wragg, a prominent merchant of Charles Town. The faces of all the others were familiar to him. "What's Mr. Wragg doing there?" he demanded. "He isn't a pirate, too?"

"No, he's no pirate," chuckled Nick. "He's what you might call a hostage. You see, all that merry-looking crowd sailed from your town a few days ago, bound for England, but we met their ship when she reached the bar and we asked 'em to come on board us. Thought we might be able to accommodate 'em better, you see. We over-hauled eight ships within a week out there, and that's



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pretty good business, better than what we've done with your Spanish Dons lately. But there's no denying the Dons do carry the richer cargoes."

"And what are you going to do with them?" asked Antony.

"That's for old Teach, the chief there, to make out. I've a notion your friend Mr. Wragg and the others in there are going to help us get that store of drugs and supplies I was telling you of. Let's be going ashore. I don't want those mates of mine to eat all the fresh fish before we get back to 'em."

Blackbeard's men—pirates and desperadoes though they were—seemed no rougher to Antony than any other seafaring men he had met at Charles Town. They carried more pistols and knives perhaps than such men, but though he listened eagerly he heard no strange ear-splitting oaths nor frightening tales of evil deeds they had committed. Nick looked after him almost like an older brother, saw that he had plenty to eat, helped him gather up wood for the fire they lighted on the shore after supper. There were a number of these small fires, each with a group of swarthy-faced men around it. As Big Bill, the man who had first hailed Antony and caught the gunwale of his boat, explained, "Blackbeard's men were glad to stretch their legs ashore whenever they got the chance."

Their pipes lighted, the pirates sat about the campfires as the moon flooded the sea with sparkling silver. Nick told Antony how he had run away from his English home in Devon when he was a boy, and had shipped on board a merchantman out of Bristol. He had followed the sea year in, year out, until one day, the captain of his ship had



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suddenly given up being a peaceful merchantman and had begun to hold up and rob any well-laden vessels he happened to meet. There was more profit in such a life, he said, and a great deal more excitement. Then he went on to tell Antony that many great sea-captains had really been pirates, and that both the people in England and the American colonists really liked the pirates as long as they preyed on Spanish commerce and the ships of enemies. King Charles the Second of England, he said, though he pretended to frown on piracy, had actually made Morgan, the greatest pirate of them all, a knight, and appointed him governor of his island of Jamaica. "In most scaport towns," said Nick, "the townsfolk are glad enough to have us walk their streets, spend our Mexican doubloons, and sell them the silks and wine we bring in, without asking any questions about where we got 'em. We're as good as any other traders then; maybe better, because we don't haggle so over a bargain. But when we hold up one o' their own precious ships they sing a song about us from t'other side their mouths."

So he talked on, boastfully enough, about the doings of the sea-rovers, but the boy, listening intently, thought that every now and then it sounded as if the dark man were making excuses for himself and his mates.

The fires burned down, and most of the men hunted soft beds under the forest trees. The summer night was warm, and the air was fresher here than in the close bunks on the ship. Big Bill and Antony found a comfortable place for themselves. "You might take it into your head to run away," said Nick, "but Big Bill and I always sleep with one eye open, and there's a couple of men by the



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boats that'll see anything stirring, and there's a big marsh through the woods, so you'll do better to stay where you be. And if they should catch you trying to take French leave, I'm afraid they'd put you in that stuffy cabin along with your friend Mr. Wragg and the others. So my advice to ye is, get a good night's sleep."

Antony took the advice so far as lying still went, though it was not nearly so easy to fall asleep. He watched the moon through the tree-tops, he listened to the lapping of the water on the shore, and he thought how strange it was that he should actually be a prisoner of the pirates. He thought of his father and mother and hoped they weren't worried about him, he had stayed away from home overnight before, camping out in the woods, and probably they wouldn't begin to worry about him until next day. Then he fell asleep, and when he woke the sun was rising over the water, and the woods were full of the early morning songs of birds.

"Yeo ho for a swim!" cried Nick, jumping up. He and Antony plunged into the water, swam for half an hour, came out and lay in the sun, drying off, put on their clothes, and went on board the ship, where, in the galley, they found the cooks had breakfast ready.

Soon afterward there was work to be done preparatory to weighing anchor. The small boats were brought on board, the crew set the sails, orders rang from bow to stern. Blackbeard was no longer a quiet man smoking a pipe in a chair. He was very alert and active, overseeing everything, and when he snapped out a word, or even jerked his thumb this way or that, men jumped to do his bidding. The anchor was hoisted aboard, the ship slowly turned from her harbor and so 'ight the channel.



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With a fresh favoring wind the ship set in toward Charles Town. Antony, on the forward deck with Nick, watched the shoreline until the bright roofs of the little settlement began to stand out from the green and blue. Farther and farther on Blackbeard sailed until they were in full view of the town. Then he called a half-dozen men by name, among them Nick, and gave them his orders. "Man the long-boat," said he, "and row ashore. Send this note to the governor. It's a list of drugs I want for my crew. And tell the governor and Council that if the drugs don't come back to me in three hours I'll send another boat ashore with the heads of Samuel Wragg and his son and a dozen other men of Charles Town. Their heads or the drugs! Look to the priming of your pistols." Blackbeard was a man of few words, but every word he spoke told.

As the others swung the long-boat overboard Nick stepped up to the chief. "I'll take the boy along," said he. "He might help us ashore, as he knows the people there." Blackbeard nodded.

An idea occurred to Antony, and whispering to Nick, he darted to the galley. He found a scrap of paper there, and scrawled a couple of lines to his father, saying he was well, and begging his parents not to worry about him. As he ran back by the cabin he couldn't help glancing in at the window, and saw Samuel Wragg and the other prisoners whispering together, their frightened faces seeming to show that they had heard what was in the wind and knew that Blackbeard meant to have their heads in case their friends in Charles Town should refuse to let him have the drugs he wanted.

The long-boat was now manned and floating lightly on the bay. At a word from Nick, Antony swung himself



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over the side of the ship by a rope and dropped into the boat. "You steer us," said Nick, "and mind you don't get us into any trouble, or overboard you go as sure as my name's Nicholas Carter."

The harbor was smooth as glass and the long-boat, pulled by its lusty crew, shot along rapidly: Nick was pulling the stroke oar, and presently Antony, who sat opposite him, took the little note he had written from his pocket. "If you go ashore, won't you give this paper to somebody?" he begged. "My father's name's on the outside, and everybody knows him. It'll make his mind easier about me."

Nick bobbed his head. "Slip it into my pocket," he murmured, nodding to where his jacket lay on the bottom of the boat.

The town was right before them now, its quays busy with the usual morning life of the water front. To Antony, however, it seemed that more men and boys than usual were standing there, some watching the long-boat, and others looking past her at the big ship far down the bay. He saw faces he knew, he saw men staring at him wonderingly, he even felt rather proud at the strange position he had so unexpectedly fallen into.

"Easy now, mates," sang out Nick, looking over his shoulder at the near water-front. He gave a few orders, and the long-boat swung gently up to an empty float, and he and the man next to him, slipping on their jackets and making sure that their pistols slid easily from their belts, stepped lightly to the float.

By now a large crowd had gathered on the shore, all staring at the strangers. Nick and his fellow-pirates, cool



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as cucumbers, walked up the plank that led from the float to the dock. There Nick made a little mocking bow to the men and boys of Charles Town. "Who's governor here?" he demanded, with the assurance of an envoy from some mighty state.

Several voices answered, "Robert Johnson is the governor."

Nick took from an inner pocket the paper Blackbeard had given him. "One of you take this message to Governor Robert Johnson. It comes from Captain Teach, sometimes known as Captain Blackbeard. He entertains certain merchants of your town on board his ship, Mr. Samuel Wragg and others. And should any of you harm me or my mates while we wait for the governor's answer Captain Teach will feel obliged, much to his regret, to do the same to your worthy townsmen on his ship."

There were murmurs and exclamations from the crowd, and whispers of "It's Blackbeard!" "It's the pirates!" and the like.

As no one stepped forward Nick now pointed to a man in a blue coat who stood fronting him. "Take this message," he said, and spoke so commandingly that the man stepped forward and took it. Then he beckoned a boy to him and gave him Antony's note. "For Mr. Jonas Evans," he said. "Make sure he gets it." After that he sat down on a bale of cotton, pulled out a pipe, filled it with tobacco, and lighted it. The other pirate did the same. The bright sun shone on the brace of pistols each man wore in his belt.

The man in the blue coat hurried to Governor Johnson with the message from the pirate chief. The governor read the message, demanding certain drugs at once, on pain of



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Samuel Wragg and the other merchants of Charles Town losing their heads. The governor sent for the Council and read the message to them. They would all have liked to tear the message to shreds and go out at once to capture this insolent sea-robber, but there was danger that if they tried to do that their worthy fellow-citizens would instantly lose their heads.

Meantime the news had spread through the town, and there was the greatest excitement. The people longed to get their hands on Blackbeard and pay him for this insult. But they dared not stir now; they dared not even lay finger on the two insolent rascals who sat on the bales of cotton on the water-front, smiling at the crowd. The families and friends of Samuel Wragg and the other prisoners, all of whom were named in Blackbeard's message to the governor, hurried to the house where the Council was meeting, and demanded that the drugs should be sent out to Blackbeard at once.

The governor and Council argued the matter up and down. They hated to yield to such a command, and yet it would be monstrous to sacrifice their friends for a few drugs. Then Governor Johnson made his decision. He reminded them that he had time and again urged the Proprietors and the Board of Trade to send out a frigate to protect the commerce of Charles Town from just such perils as this; and added that it was his duty to protect the lives of all the citizens. He would send the drugs, and then the Council must see to it that such a situation shouldn't occur again.

All the medicines on Blackbeard's list were carried down to the float and put on board the long-boat under



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Nicholas Carter's supervision. "I thank you all in the name of Captain Teach," Nick said, smiling and bowing in his best manner. Among the crowd on shore Antony had caught the faces of his father and mother, and waved to them and called out that he would soon be back.

The long-boat left the shore amid angry mutterings from the people. The tide was low now, and presently Antony, by mischance, mistook the course of the channel, and ran the boat aground. He showed so plainly, however, that he hadn't meant to do it, that Nick forgave him, and said he wouldn't throw him overboard. It took them some time for the crew to get the boat afloat again, and when they finally reached the ship they found Blackbeard in a terrible rage at the delay and almost on the point of beheading Mr. Wragg and the other prisoners.

The sight of the drugs calmed his anger somewhat, and he ordered his captives brought out on deck. There he had them searched, and took everything of value they had with them, among other things a large amount of gold from Mr. Wragg. Some of their clothes he took also, so that it was hard to say whether the poor merchants were shivering more from fright or from cold. Then he had them rowed in the long-boat to a neighboring point of land, where they were left to make their way home as best they could.

Antony had asked Nick if he couldn't be set on shore with the others, but Nick, drawing him away from the rest of the crew, had whispered, "Stay with me a day or two more. I'm going to leave the ship myself. I'm tired of this way of living, and I'd like to have a friend to speak a good word for me when I land. I'll see that no harm comes to



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you, boy. I got that note to your father, and—one good turn deserves another. We'll leave old Blackbeard soon."

Antony liked the dark man. "All right," said he. "I think we can get into Charles Town without any one knowing who you are. I'll look out for you."

"Much obliged to you, Tony," said Nick, with a grin.

So when the pirate ship sailed out to sea again, Antony was still on board her.

### II

Five days Antony stayed on board the pirate ship, while Blackbeard doctored the sick men of his crew with the medicines he had obtained in Charles Town. The boy was well treated, for it was understood that he was under Nick's protection, and moreover, although the pirates could show their teeth and snarl savagely enough in a fight, they were friendly and easy-going among themselves. It was a pleasant cruise for Antony, for the weather held good, and Nick taught him much about the handling of a ship. Then, after five days of sailing, Blackbeard anchored off one of the long sandy islands that dot that coast, and those of his men who were tired of their small quarters on the ship went ashore and spent the night there. Among them were Nick and Antony, and, as on that other night ashore, they made their beds at a little distance from the others.

Just before dawn Antony was waked by some one pulling his shoulder. It was Nick, who signaled to him that he should rise noiselessly and follow him. The boy obeyed, and the two went silently through the woods and came out on another beach as the sun was rising. They walked



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for some time, watching the wonderful colors the sun was sending over sea and sky. Then said Nick, "We're far enough away from them now. They won't hunt for us: they've more than enough crew, and old Teach ain't the man to bother his head about a couple of run-aways. Five minutes of curses, and he'll be up and away again, with never a thought of us. I'll beat you to the water, Tony," and Nick started to pull his shirt over his head.

They swam as long as they wanted, and then they followed the shore, growing more and more hungry as they went along. "There must be fishermen somewhere," said Nick. "A little farther south, and we'd have fruit for the taking; but here"—he shrugged his shoulders—"nothing but a few berries that rattle around in one like peas in a pail."

After an hour, however, they came to a fisherman's shanty, and found the owner working with his nets and lines on the shore. He was a big man, with reddish hair and beard, and clothes that had been so often soaked in salt water that they had almost all the colors of the rainbow. "We'll work all day for food and drink," said Nick, grinning.

The fisherman grinned in return. "Help yourselves," said he, waving his hand toward his shanty. "You're welcome to what you find; I got my gold and silver safe hid away."

They found dried fish and corn-meal cakes and water in an earthen jar. When they came out to the beach again they told the man their names, and learned in turn that his was Simeon Park. They went out with him in his sailing-smack, and fished all day, and when they came back they



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felt like old friends, as men do who spend a day together on the sea.

There followed a week of fishing with Simeon, varied by mornings when they went hunting ducks and wild turkeys and geese with him over the marshes and the long flats that lay along the coast. Antony had never had a better time; he liked both of his new friends, and, except for his father and mother, he was in no hurry to go back to Charles Town and work in the warehouse there. At the end of the week Simeon Park suggested that they should take the smack for a cruise, fishing and gunning as chance offered. So they put to sea again, this time in a much smaller vessel than Blackbeard's merchantman.

They met with one small gale, but after that came favoring winds. Presently they found themselves near Charles Town harbor again. They camped on shore one night, and Antony told Nick that he must be heading for home shortly.

Next morning the boy was waked by the big fisherman, who pointed out to sea. Three big ships were standing off the coast, and even at that distance they could see that the "Jolly Roger" of a pirate, the skull and crossbones, flew from the masthead of the biggest vessel. Guns boomed across the water. "The two sloops are after the big fellow," exclaimed Simeon Park. "Let's put out in our boat, and have a look at the game."

They put off in their smack, and with the skilful fisherman at the helm, stood off and on, tacked and ran before the wind, until they came to a point where they were out of shot and yet near enough to see all that was taking place.



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"I can read the names of the sloops," said Park, squinting across at their sterns; "one's called *Sea Nymph* and t'other the *Henry*, and they both hail from Charles Town."

Nick chuckled. "That governor of yours," he said to Antony, "didn't lose much time. He's got two sloops of war now for certain, and he means to try a tussle with the rovers." He too squinted at the vessels. "I don't think she's Blackbeard's, however. No, there's her name." And he spelled out the words *Royal James*.

The two sloops, each mounting eight guns, had swept down on the pirate, evidently planning to catch her in a narrow strait formed by two spits of land. But the pirate ship, undaunted, had sought to sail past the sloops, and by her greater speed to gain the open sea. Then the two sloops bore in close, and before the *Royal James* knew what she was about she had sailed out of the channel and was stuck fast on a shoal of sand. Then the *Henry*, too, grounded in shoal water, and some distance further, her mate, the *Sea Nymph*.

This was a pretty situation, all three ships aground, and only the little fishing-smack able to sail about as she liked. "Lucky we don't draw more'n a couple of feet of water," said Simeon Park, at the helm. "If we only had a gun of our own aboard we could hop about and pepper first one, then t'other."

"And have one good round shot send us to the bottom as easy as a man crushes a pesky mosquito," observed Nick. "No, thankee. If it's all the same to you I'd rather keep out of gun-fire of both sides to this little controversy."



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Antony, crouched on the small deck forward, was too busy watching what was going on to consider the likelihood of his boat going aground.

The tide was at the ebb, and there was no likelihood of any of the three fighting-ships getting off the shoals for hours. The *Royal James* and the *Henry* had listed the same way, and now lay almost in line with each other, so that the hull of the pirate ship was turned directly toward the Charles Town sloop, while the deck of the latter was in full view of the pirate, and only a pistol-shot away.

"They're more like two forts now than ships," said Nick. "There she goes!"

Antony was yelling. The *Henry* had opened fire on the pirate ship. But instantly the *Royal James* returned the fire with a broadside, which, on account of its position, raked the open deck of the *Henry*.

"Those lads have got grit to stick to their guns!" cried Park, keeping his smack bobbing on the waves at a safe distance. "They're using their muskets, too!" Antony cheered every time shots blazed from the *Henry* and held his breath to see what damage the answering fire of the pirate did to his own townsmen.

The other Charles Town sloop, the *Sea Nymph*, was aground too far downstream to be of any help to her mate. Her crew, like the crew of three in the fishing-smack, could only watch from a distance, and cheer as the battle was waged back and forth.

And waged back and forth it was for a long time, while men were shot down at the guns, and parts of each ship shot away, and the sea scattered with wreckage, and the air filled with smoke and the heavy, acrid odor of powder.



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“The pirate’s getting the best of it,” shouted Simeon Park, after some time of fighting. It looked that way; her crew were yelling exultantly, and her captain had called to the sloop, demanding that the latter’s crew haul down their flag in surrender.

At length, however, the tide began to turn, and with it the chance of victory for the pirates. The *Henry* floated from the shoal first, and her captain prepared to grapple with his enemy and board her. Then the *Sea Nymph* floated, and headed up to aid her consort. The pirate chief, seeing the chances now two to one against him, yelled to his crew to fight harder than ever; and the *Royal James* blazed again and again with broadsides, making a desperate stand, like a wild animal brought to bay. The rail of the *Henry* was carried overboard, and to the three in the fishing-smack it looked as if some of the crew had gone over with it.

Antony forgot the sea-fight; he was calling directions to Park to steer his boat so as to near the wreckage. He saw a man with his arm thrown over a piece of the railing, and he called encouragement to him. The fisherman sent his boat dashing ahead, and the man in the water, hearing Antony’s voice, tried to swim in his direction. “Easy now!” cried the boy, and the boat swept up to the wreckage, and lay there, with loosely flapping sail, while Antony and Nick leaned far over her side and drew the man on board. They laid him on the deck, while Park, at the tiller brought his boat about and scurried away from the line of fire.

The man was not badly hurt; he had a flesh wound in one shoulder, and was dazed from having been flung into



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the sea with the railing. "Never mind me," he said. "Look for others." The three looked over the water, but though they saw plenty of floating wreckage, they spied no other men.

"She's striking her flag!" cried Park. They all looked at the fighting ships, and saw that the pirate had hauled down his flag, and heard the cheers of victory from the *Henry* and the *Sea Nymph*. Antony jumped up and down and yelled with the best of them; the men of Charles Town were having their revenge on the sea-rovers who had so openly flouted them a short time before.

"That's the end of Blackbeard!" cried the wounded man, sitting up and watching the crews of the two sloops as they prepared to board the other vessel.

Nick shook his head. "Not Blackbeard," he said. "Whoever that rover may be, he's not old Teach, I know."

The gun-smoke drifted away across the water, and Park, at Nick's suggestion, headed his boat for shore. The dark man had no wish to sail up to the sloops from Charles Town just then, thinking it not unlikely that some of the crew might remember him as Blackbeard's agent at the Charles Town dock. So they skirted the shore till they reached a good landing-place. There they camped, binding the sailor's wounded shoulder as best they could, cooking dinner, for they were all ravenously hungry, and resting on the sand. There the sailor, Peter Duval, told them how angry Governor Johnson and the men of Charles Town had been when Blackbeard had sailed away with his medicines, leaving Samuel Wragg and the others, plundered and almost stripped, to find their way home; and how Colonel Rhett had sworn that with two sloops he



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would rid the sea of the pirate, and had sailed forth to do it. In return Antony told the sailor who he was and they planned that in a day or two they would return home. "And Nick there is going back with me," added Antony, nodding toward the dark young fellow who sat on the beach with them.

Now Duval had heard how Blackbeard or some of his men had kidnapped the son of Jonas Evans, and he had his own suspicions concerning what manner of man this dark-haired fellow might be. Yet he could not help liking the man, who had certainly helped to do him a good turn; and even if he had been a pirate there was no reason why he shouldn't have changed his mind about that way of living and have decided to become an honest citizen. So he nodded his head approvingly, and said, "That's good. The old town needs some likely-looking men," and shifted about so that the warm sand made a more comfortable pillow for his wounded shoulder.

Next day they sailed back to Simeon Park's cabin, and there Nick discovered a pair of shears and cut his black mustache and cropped his hair close, so that he looked more like one of the English Roundheads than he did like a sea-rover. "Now, mates," said he to Antony and Duval, "I'm a wandering trader you happened to meet in the woods. Tony stole away from Blackbeard's men one night, and found Park's cabin here. Then I came along, and a day or two later the three of us picked Duval out of the sea. What d'ye say to that, mates?"

"I say," said Duval, winking, "that with the lad and me to speak up for you, they'll be glad to have you in Charles Town, whatever you may be." He added sagely, "Folks



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. aren't over-particular in the colonies about your grand-daddy. Many of 'em came over from the old country without questions asked as to why they came. No, sir; if a man deals square by us, we deal square by him."

The following afternoon Simeon Park's boat tacked across the bay, and zigzagged up to the Charles Town docks. At sundown his three passengers landed, and bade him a hearty farewell. Few people were about, and none, as it chanced, who knew them so that the three walked straightway up the street along the harbor, Nick in the middle, looking as innocent as if he had never seen the town before.

The Evans family lived in a small frame house on Meeting Street, and husband and wife were just sitting down to supper when there came a knock at the street door. Jonas Evans opened the door, and his son sprang in and caught him around the shoulders. "Here I am, dad!" he cried. "Safe and sound again!" After that bear-like squeeze he rushed to his mother, and gave her the same greeting, while she exclaimed, and kissed him again and again, and called him all her pet names.

"And I've brought a friend home with me, Nicholas Carter," said Antony. "I met him along the coast, and he's been very good to me, so you must be good to him. He's a splendid fellow," he added loyally. "And he and a fisherman and I pulled Peter Duval out of the water after the big sea-fight the other day."

"Any friend of my boy's is my friend," said Mr. Evans, and he caught Nick by the hand and drew him into the house. Then he shook hands with Duval, and so did Mrs. Evans, almost crying in her delight at having her son home



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again, and they both urged the sailor to stay and have supper with them, but he said that now that he had seen his two mates safely home he must dash away to his own family.

Antony and Nick sat at the supper-table and ate their fill while Jonas Evans told them the news. Colonel Rhett had sailed out from Charles Town with his two sloops and after a great battle had captured the pirate ship. He thought he had captured Blackbeard, but found he was mistaken. The pirate had turned out to be a man named Stede Bonnet, a man who came of a good family and owned some property, a gentleman one might say, a man who had been a major in the army, and a worthy citizen of Bridgetown. Once he had repented of his pirate's life, and taken the King's pardon, but he had gone back to his lawless trade, and been one of the fiercest of his kind. No one in Charles Town could understand why such a man had a liking for such a business. Mr. Evans supposed that it must be because of the wild adventures that went with the career of the sea-rovers. Here Antony caught a smile on Nick's face, and knew that his friend was thinking there were many reasons why respectable fellows turned outlaws. Some drifted into it, as Nick had done as a boy, and found it easier to stay in than to leave.

Colonel Rhett, Jonas Evans added, had returned to Charles Town with the *Royal James* as a prize, and with Stede Bonnet and thirty of his crew in irons. Eighteen of the men of Carolina had been killed in the sea fight, and many more badly wounded.

Then, when he could eat no more, Antony told his story. "And I hope, dad," he finished, "that you can find



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a place for Nick in the warehouse. And on Sundays," he added to his friend, "we'll get out on the water, and go gunning and fishing."

"Any honest work," said Nick, with his familiar smile, "till I can get my bearings, and see what I'm best fitted for." He thought he might endure the warehouse for a week or so, but already he felt the call to the old free life of the rover.

Jonas Evans agreed to try to find a place for his son's friend. They talked till the tallow dips sputtered and went out, and then Nick and Antony climbed to their two bedrooms up under the eaves. "It's the first time I've slept in a house for years, Tony," said Nick. "I don't know how I'll like it."

He found that he liked it very well, and the ex-pirate slept comfortably under the roof of the respectable Charles Town merchant.

### III

Jonas Evans was as good as his word, and when Antony went to work in the warehouse Nick was given a place there too. The dark-haired man had some pieces of silver in his pocket, and he bought himself quiet-colored clothes and a broadbrimmed hat, so that he looked very much like other men in the town; but his black eyes would shine and his clean-shaven lips curl in amusement as they had done when Antony first rowed his boat almost into his arms. However, the people of Charles Town were accustomed to having all sorts of men settle among them, as Peter Duval had said, and they made no inquiries as to what a man had done before he arrived there, but only consid-



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ered how he behaved now, and so they took it for granted that Nicholas Carter was quite respectable enough, and didn't trouble themselves about his past. And who would be likely to think that the man with the long black hair and mustache who had landed from Blackbeard's small-boat and insolently ordered the governor to furnish him with drugs was the same man as this young fellow, who was polite and friendly with every one?

The room in the warehouse where Antony and Nick worked had a window that looked out across the water, and often the boy saw his friend gazing at the dancing waves with longing eyes. But when Nick would catch Antony looking at him he would grin and shake his head, and then try to appear very much absorbed in the job he had on hand. At such times the boy, who had only tasted that free life of sea and shore for a few days, could appreciate the feelings of the man who had known that life for years.

Meantime Charles Town had been very busy dealing with the pirates it had captured. There was no jail in the town, so most of the crew of the *Royal James* had been locked up in the watch house, while their leader, Stede Bonnet, and two of his men had been given in charge of the marshal to keep under close guard in his own house. After some time the crew were put on trial before Chief Justice Trott, and the attorney-general read to the court and jury a list of thirty-eight ships that Bonnet and Teach had captured in the last six months. The prisoners had no lawyers to defend them, but two very able lawyers to attack them, and the Chief Justice and the other judges, as well as the jury, were convinced that the crew of the



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*Royal James* had beyond question been guilty of piracy. Four, however, were freed of the charge, while the rest were sentenced to be hung, the customary punishment for pirates.

Stede Bonnet, their captain, was not put on trial. The guards at the marshal's house had been very careless, and Bonnet had made friends with some men in the town. With the help of these friends he had disguised himself as a woman, and with one of his mates had escaped in a boat with an Indian and a negro. People said that his plan was to reach the ships of another pirate named Moody, who had appeared off the bar of the harbor a few days before, with a ship of fifty guns, and two smaller ships, likewise armed, that he had captured on their way from New England to Charles Town.

From the warehouse window Antony and Nick saw the sails of this insolent new sea-rover, who dared stand so close inshore, waiting to pounce on any boats that might put out from the town.

The governor had already sent word to England, asking for aid in his warfare with the buccaneers, but none came from England. So he told the Council that they must act for themselves, and they ordered the best ships in port impressed into service and armed. Colonel Rhett, the man who had captured Bonnet, was asked to take command of this new fleet, but he declined, owing to some difficulty he had had with Governor Johnson. Thereupon the governor himself declared he would be the admiral, to the great delight of Charles Town. Four ships, one of them being the captured *Royal James*, were armed with cannon, and a call was sent out for volunteers.



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Nick and Antony, going home one night, read the governor's call posted on a wall. They went down to the harbor and saw the big ships ready to sail. "This looks like a chance to set myself right again," said Nick, slowly. "I wouldn't fight my old mates or Blackbeard; but I don't see any reason why I shouldn't help to clear the sea of Moody or any other rascal. I'm going to volunteer."

"The governor might want a boy on board," said Antony. "There are lots of things I can do about a ship."

That night he asked his father to let him volunteer, and though Jonas Evans and his wife were very loath to lose their son again, he finally won their permission. Their friends and neighbors were volunteering; there was no good reason why they should refuse to do their share.

Next day three hundred men and boys volunteered for the little navy of Charles Town. Then word came that Stede Bonnet and his companions when they had reached the bar had found that Moody was cruising northward that day, and so had put back and taken refuge on Sullivan's Island. Colonel Rhett, who was very angry at the escape of his captive, volunteered to lead a party to capture Bonnet again. A small party went in search, hunting the fugitives. The sand-hills, covered with a thick growth of stunted live-oaks and myrtles, offered splendid protection, and the hunt was difficult, but at last the men were sighted, shots were fired, Bonnet's comrade was killed, and the pirate chief himself was taken prisoner, and once more brought back to Charles Town by Colonel Rhett.

While this search and capture were going on Antony and Nick were busy on Governor Johnson's flag-ship, making ready to put to sea. Lookouts caught sight of the



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pirate Moody's vessels returning, sailing closer and closer in, actually coming inside the bar, as though they meant to attack the town itself. But inside the bar they stopped, and casting anchor, quietly rode there, while the sunset colored their sails, and men and women of Charles Town, on the quays and from the roofs and windows of their houses, watched them and wondered what might be the pirate's plans.

That night Governor Johnson, from his flag-ship, gave the order to the other ships of his small fleet to follow him, and they all slipped their moorings and stole down the harbor to the fort, and waited there.

At dawn next day the four ships from Charles Town, with their guns under cover and no signs of war about their decks, crossed the bar, heading toward the sea. The pirate supposed them to be peaceful merchantmen, and let them sail past him, and then had his ships close in on their track, in order to cut off their retreat. What he had often done before with merchantmen he did now; he ran up the black flag and called to the ships to surrender.

But Governor Johnson had planned to get his enemy into just this position. The pirate fleet now lay between his own ships and the town. He hoisted the royal ensign of England, threw open his ports, unmasked his guns, and poured a broadside of shot into the nearest pirate ship. Antony, from the deck of the flag-ship, could see the sudden surprise and alarm on the faces of the pirate crew.

The pirate chief was a clever skipper, however. By wonderful navigating he sailed his ship straight for the open sea, and actually managed to get past Governor Johnson. The latter followed in swift pursuit, and as the ships were





Bonner's comrade was killed, and the pirate chief himself was taken prisoner



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now somewhat scattered, the flag-ship signaled the *Sea Nymph* and the *Royal James* to look out for the pirate sloop.

Soon these ships and the sloop were close together, yard-arm to yard-arm, and a desperate fight under way. The men of Charles Town fought well; they drove the pirates from their guns, they swarmed aboard the pirate ship, and killed the pirates who resisted them. Most of the pirates fought to the last inch of deck-room, refusing to surrender. A few took refuge in the hold, and threw up their hands when the enemy surrounded them. Then the crews of the *Sea Nymph* and the *Royal James* sailed the captured sloop back to the harbor, where the men and women who had been listening to the guns cheered wildly.

In the meantime the governor's flag-ship was chasing the pirate flag-ship. Antony and another boy stood near Johnson, ready to run his errands whenever needed; Nick was of the crew that manned one of the forward cannon. It was a long stern chase, but Johnson slowly drew up on the other. The buccaneers threw their small boats and even their guns overboard in an attempt to lighten their ship, but the ship from Charles Town was the faster, and at length overhauled the rover. A few broadsides of shot, and the black flag came fluttering down from the mast-head; the governor and part of his crew went on board and the pirates surrendered.

Antony, dogging the governor's steps, was by him when the hatches were lifted; to his great astonishment he saw that the hold was filled with frightened women. The governor turned to the captured rover captain. "What does this mean?" he demanded, pointing to the women, who



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were now climbing to the deck with the help of the Charles Town crew.

"When we captured this ship," said the rover, "we found she was the *Eagle*, bound from England to Virginia, carrying convicts and indentured servants. We'd have set them ashore at the first good chance."

It was true. There were thirty-six women on board, sailing from England to find husbands and homes in the new world. The pirates had changed the name of the ship, and taken her for their own use, but had had no chance to land the women safely.

The governor had another surprise that day. He found that the captain of this fleet of pirates was not Moody, as all Charles Town had supposed, but an even more dreaded buccaneer, Richard Worley. This Richard Worley had been on board the sloop, and had been killed in the fierce fighting on her deck that morning.

Antony and Nick were of the crew that brought the captured *Eagle*, with her cargo of women, back to shore. There kind-hearted people of Charles Town took care of the frightened passengers. In the town that night there was great rejoicing over the defeat of two of the rovers who infested that part of the seas, Stede Bonnet and Richard Worley. It was true that Blackbeard and Moody were still at large, but it might well be that the fate of their fellows would prove a warning to them that the people of Charles Town meant business. Governor Johnson and his crews went back to their regular business, and the town grew quiet again.

Neither Moody nor Blackbeard again troubled the good people there. Weeks later it was learned that Moody had



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heard how Charles Town was prepared for him, and that he had gone to Jamaica, and there taken the "King's pardon," which was granted to all pirates who would give up their lawless trade before the following first of January. Afterward word came that Blackbeard had been captured by a fleet sent out by Governor Spotswood of Virginia, and commanded by officers of the Royal British Navy.

Stede Bonnet's crew had already been tried and found guilty of piracy. The judges had now to consider the case of that buccaneer chief himself. Every one in Charles Town knew that he had sailed the seas time and again with the "Jolly Roger" at his masthead, but he was a man of very attractive appearance and manners, and many of the good people of the town thought that he really meant to repent and lead a better life. The judges and jury, however, with Bonnet's past record before them, saw only the plain duty of dealing with him as they had already dealt with his crew. Then Colonel Rhett, the gallant soldier who had twice captured Bonnet, came forward and offered to take the pirate personally to London, and ask the king to pardon him. The governor felt that he could not consent to this request; he knew how Bonnet had taken the oath of repentance once before, and had immediately run up the "Jolly Roger" on his ship at the first chance he found. Bonnet was a pirate, caught in the very act. The law was very clear. So Bonnet was hanged, as were the forty other prisoners who had been found guilty.

Nick stayed with Antony at Mr. Evans's warehouse until the excitement of the war with the pirates had blown over. He and Antony were almost inseparable, and the people who met the slim, dark fellow liked him for his



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good nature and ready smile. Whenever they found the chance Antony and he went sailing or hunting or fishing.

"Tony," he said one day as they sailed back from fishing, "I'm going to leave the warehouse. No, don't look put out; I'm not going back to my old way of living. Besides, there aren't any of the rovers left for me to join. But I was made for the open air, and the work there in the shop can't hold me. The governor wants soldiers for his province of South Carolina, and I've a notion the life of a soldier would suit me. I take naturally to swords and pistols."

Antony smiled. "You'll make a good one, Nick. I shouldn't wonder if you got to be a general. Yes, you'll like it better. But Dad and I'll hate to have you go."

So, a few days later, Nicholas Carter, who had once been one of Blackbeard's crew, offered his services to Governor Johnson and became a soldier in the small army of the province. He did well, and rose to be a colonel, and one of the most popular men of Charles Town. But sometimes, when he and Antony Evans were alone together, Colonel Nicholas Carter would wink and say, "Remember the day when you and I sailed away on Blackbeard's ship? Yeo ho, for the life of a pirate!"

"The day you kidnapped me, you mean," Antony would remind him. "That was a wonderful holiday, to be sure!"

For respectable men turned pirates, and pirates reformed and became worthy citizens and soldiers, in the days before the little settlement of Charles Town became the city of Charleston in one of the thirteen states of the American Union.



# Black Falcon

By ARMSTRONG SPERRY

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WHERE THE Bay of Barataria meets the Gulf of Mexico, time and tide have built up three wooded islets of tawny sand: Grande Terre, Grand Isle and Cheniere Caminada. Some fifty miles south of New Orleans, they stand like sentinels barring the way from open water into the Bay. The surrounding shores offer a labyrinth of bayou, waterway and marshland, deceptively cloaked in swamp cane and palmetto, hazardous in the extreme to one ignorant of its secrets, but a region designed by nature as the perfect backdrop for those who would trade in contraband.

Here it was that the corsairs of the Caribbean, driven by the English from their haunts in Guadeloupe and Martinique, had made their final stand: a roaring, swaggering, hard-living, quarrelsome breed of men. Once within the Bay of Barataria they were safe from pursuit, answerable to no earthly power, free to carry on their depredations; while the three islets offered ideal sites for fortifications, warehouses, barracoons and palm-thatched dwellings.



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To the south, Colombia had revolted against the tyranny of Spain, and letters of marque issued at Cartagena transformed these same outlaws from pirates into privateers, with license to prey upon the treasure ships of His Most Catholic Majesty. Ships disappeared mysteriously from the Gulf, their crews were never found. And if the plundered vessel did not always fly the banner of Castile, *eh quoi?* To err was human!

It was upon just such a shore that Wade Thayer and the faithful Christian, drawn by the beacon of a distant fire, crawled up out of the sea. In after years, thinking back to that wild and fateful night, the boy understood that except for Christian's phenomenal endurance and blind loyalty, he must surely have perished; for the days in the hold of the *Cerberus*, the ill-nourishing food, the plaguing wound in his leg had robbed Wade of much of his natural strength.

But toward the far-off beach the bonfire lured the swimmers like a beacon of safe harbor, imparting strength to their limbs when one more stroke seemed to be beyond human capability. Too, the night-black waters of the Gulf were charged with unguessed terrors: dark shapes felt rather than seen, whirling, gliding, slithering on nameless errands, touching the swimmers with horror. Once an up-reaching tentacle, icy-cold, brushed the boy's cheek, and again the rough hide of a deep-sea monster raked the length of his arm, while a long, narrow belly gleamed pale in the starlight before it vanished into unsounded depths of darkness. Yet the bonfire grew ever larger and larger, and presently, above the drone of wind and sea, rose the shouts of roistering men and snatches of wild song. On



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that distant strand black shapes capered like marionettes around the flames.

The boy could not have told the exact moment when his feet touched sand, but suddenly a surge of overwhelming thankfulness went through him, a sense of reprieve that left him giddy and light-headed. Half supported by Christian, his breath coming in gasps, he staggered through the shallows toward that strip of firelit beach. But even above the stunning impact of safety, Wade sensed the instant hush that descended upon the roistering men. He saw them advance warily, with cocked pistol and drawn cutlass, toward the water's edge. He tried to call out, to reassure these men that he and Christian came as friends, sore beset; but no words freed themselves of the constriction in his throat. It was Christian who managed to shout some unintelligible sound that seemed to have a placating effect, for pistols were replaced in sashes, cutlasses lowered. The score or more of men—fantastic in the streaking firelight—stood waiting, however, with alert expectancy to meet the two half-drowned figures who advanced so painfully through the shallows.

Then the boy, still supported by his giant companion, was standing on the shore and fighting down the trembling weakness that robbed his limbs of strength and left him without speech. Encircled by strange and wild-visaged men, Wade had the confused feeling that he stood in the dead-quiet center of a storm, momentarily safe from the hurricane vortex of events. He looked into the faces that stared back at him: some hostile, others noncommittal, but all avid with curiosity. Swarthy men, bearded, scarred, earringed. Men armed with knives and pistols and cut-



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lasses. Men whose hands and tawdry finery were smeared with grease from the feast whose evidence lay piled up on wooden trenchers near the fire.

One fellow—an extraordinary figure in cottonade pantaloons, his bared torso tattooed from throat to navel—appeared to be a leader of sorts. This man stepped forward and spat into the sand, wiped a forearm across his mustachios. “Where you from, boy?” he bellowed, his voice like a thunderclap. “Me, I spik the Engleesh, my one bad ‘abit. Tak’ you’ time, boy, tak’ you’ time. We no keel you. Not yet anyway.”

Wade stared back at this amazing figure, searching for words with which to answer. For the moment his eyes were transfixed by the tattooing that covered the man’s tanned hide like wallpaper in a design of lovers’ knots, porpoises and intertwined initials. A two-headed dragon, emblazoning the barrel chest, wound its way around the man’s paunch to disappear somewhere behind the scarlet sash that sported an arsenal of knives and pistols.

The boy swallowed violently, managed to say: “A British warship—we escaped . . .”

The man’s eyes slitted dangerously. Again he spat. “*Diable!* You are Engleesh, eh?” He took one threatening step forward while a mutter rumbled and rose among his companions. Hands flew toward knives. Pistols were cocked.

“No!” Wade cried, finding his voice. “We’re Americans! Prisoners . . .”

A slow smile transformed the lowering countenance of the leader. “Ah,” he rumbled. “You ’Mericans. But this is bettair! Why you don’ tole me de first place? If you was





Half supported by Christian, Wade staggered toward that  
strip of firelit beach



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Engleesh, we mak' you scat like grasshopper. Or maybe we cut you' throat, *pst!* like dat!" And he drew a fore-finger across his gullet. "So you 'Mericans, eh? Das ver' good." He made an expansive gesture toward the bonfire where the heaped-up pile of steaming viands bespoke an interrupted feast. "But you hongry, thirsty maybe. You come jus' in time. On *fête* day we celebrate."

The odors of roasting food, the crying need for drink set Wade's senses swimming. "A *fête* day?" he managed to bring out, scarce knowing what it was he said. What day was this, anyway?

"*Hola!* Eve'y day is *fête* day in Barataria," came the airy answer.

"Barataria?" the boy cried, scarce daring to believe. "Is that where we are?"

"*Si. Grande Terre, my fran'.*"

The boy's heart thumped. "Lafitte's island?"

"Ah! So you know the Capitaine Jean, eh?"

"Everyone knows Jean Lafitte."

The man's smile broadened; he thumped his barrel chest. "Then maybe you know me too—Dominique You, tha's my name. Connoncer of the gr-r-reat Napoleon!"

"I've heard of you," Wade managed. "You're Lafitte's lieutenant . . ."

"Ha, you smart boy, ver' smart. I t'ink we be good fran's. But *voyons*, more bettair you eat now, drink too. Bimeby we mak' introduction. Eve'body know eve'body. All good fran's in Grande Terre. You 'Mericans, you no' Engleesh. That is enough. Come, eat!"

With a lordly motion, as one accustomed to command, Dominique You cleared the way, and his outlandish com-



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panions stood aside as their leader conducted Wade and Christian toward the heartening warmth of the fire.

On crude wooden trenchers, mounds of oysters that had been roasted in their shells lay surrounded by piles of shrimp and crayfish, flanked by red snapper baked in leaves. Wild-fowl sizzled on spits over the coals, the dripping grease sending up little flares of light. A vast iron kettle suspended from a trivet above the flames gave off a savory steam of *bouillabaisse*, and from a cask set upright in the sand Dominique You was already pouring two beakers of wine that glowed ruby-red in the firelight. It seemed that in the twinkling of an eye the scene which only a moment before had been lowering with threat had taken on a festive air of welcome. Somewhere a fiddle resumed a lively tune while half a dozen raucous voices snatched at the words, sent them rollicking into the darkness:

*“Dans mon chemin j’ai rencontré  
Trois cavaliers bien montés,  
L’un à cheval, les autres à pied,*

*“Lon, lon laridon dai!  
Lon, lon laridon daine!”*

Never before in Wade’s life had food tasted so surpassingly good as that which these weathered men pressed upon him. He and Christian fell upon it as men famished, as indeed they were, while Dominique You and some of his band discussed their visitors in a polyglot of tongues, and others sang themselves hoarse as they capered in outlandish dances.



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When at length Wade and Christian had eaten their fill and some measure of warmth and strength had been restored to their weary limbs, Dominique You assumed the manner of a master of ceremonies.

"Now we be acquainted," he declared, affably thumping the boy's shoulder. "We all be fran's. Bimeby we sleep but not yet. An' tomorrow, I tak' you see Capitaine Jean. But now is time we mak' fran's."

With an air that was the parody of a marquis making his *reverence*, Dominique summoned one man after another to be presented to the guests. And whether it might be the swift release of nervous tension, the restoring food, or the ruby-red wine working in his veins, Wade could not have told—but the scene which followed on that firelit beach, with the black waters of the Gulf sighing in sleep and great golden stars hanging close overhead, swam across the boy's consciousness in all the unreality of a phantasm, scarcely to be believed: Dominique You with his tattooing and grandiloquent airs, the bearded men in tattered finery, each acknowledging an introduction after his own fashion.

"Thees," boomed the master of ceremonies, "is Réné Beluche. A good enough fellow, too. Beluche fears *ni Dieu, ni diable*. He got de *bons sens* in dat small head, I tell you true."

And Wade beheld a wiry little man, neither young nor old, with eyes alert and glancing, like those of some small wild animal that gets its living by its wits rather than by strength.

With exaggerated aplomb this man called Réné Beluche bowed now from the waist, a courtly gesture, fixing Wade the while with an impudent smile. "You no more scare,



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eh?" he chortled. "You sure, you, we going keel you, huh? *Soyez tranquille!* I t'ink you not die ver' soon." With which, nimble as a cricket, he bowed his way back into the circle of seated figures, while Dominique You waved forth another man for presentation.

This time Wade beheld a towering figure whose bulbous belly, like that of some bloated spider, was perched on pipestem legs. The man's face was framed in a bush of wiry black hair; half his nose had been sliced off in some bloody encounter, lending him a horrendous aspect. He was dressed, too, in black, whereas all the other men were in garish colors.

Dominique was booming: "An' thees handsome fellow is name' Louis Chichigzola. Here we call 'im Nez Coupé —moch easier to say. In New Orleans he turn de town upside-undere. Beeg man, not spik moch, no. But de ladies, ah . . . ! They t'row roses to 'im in the streets!"

With a sheepish leer the monstrous Nez Coupé growled: "He mak' mych talk, thees Dominique, with big mouth. Some day maybe I sew it up for heem." With which promise he sought refuge in the seated circle while the master of ceremonies produced yet another figure—this time a man sinister-looking in the extreme.

"Thees fine gentleman, my fran' is name' Gambi—Vincent Gambi. More better he be you fran' than you enemy, I tell you true."

And Wade, staring into the curiously pale eyes that bored into his own, felt certain of this truth. For the man confronting him owned the face of a bird of prey, yellow as a *louis d'or*, with a hooked beak of nose and a cruel slit of mouth which looked as if it opened neither for the



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speech nor sustenance of common men. Three fingers were missing from Gambi's right hand, leaving thumb and forefinger as a sort of claw, with which appendage he now offered a sardonic salute. But he gave no word of greeting.

The boy was relieved when a man named Davezac took Gambi's place. A misshapen little fellow, this Davezac, who laughed at his own deformity and evinced no offense when Dominique You called him *le bossu*, the hunchback. Davezac was a gnome with incongruously powerful arms ending in hands that appeared capable of violence; but there was an impish spark in his black eyes.

"I am not so *beau lak'* Nez Coupé," he piped in a thin voice. "But *surré tonnerre*, it is de will of God. An' men bow at me wit' moch respec' and call me *M'sieu*. For why, you ask? Because *le bossu* bring moch good luck. Eve'y-one lak' *le bossu*." And Davezac skipped back to the circle crabwise, long arms dangling.

Around the company Dominique went, singling out one, now another, while Wade Thayer swayed with fatigue as he struggled to keep his eyes propped open. Christian had given up all pretense of attention. "I swear I've come to the end of the road," he mumbled. "I can't look or listen no mo', Young Mister. Not even if they kills me. Couldn't be no deader than the way I feel, anyhow." And his chin sank wearily on his great chest.

Was it possible, the boy wondered, that he and Christian had actually escaped from the prison ship to find refuge among these men of many breeds—French, Portuguese, the mixed bloods of the Caribee, Catalans and Maltese?

For an instant it flashed through Wade's mind that these



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wild men, finished presently with their diverting charade, their songs and dances, might fully intend to put an end to him and Christian. Who would ever be the wiser? But so overpowering was the fatigue that lay like a weight upon him, that the boy could not have run a dozen feet to escape the most implacable death.

As from a great distance the voice of Dominique You came to him: "An' thees noble fellow is name' Angel Rabbelo. . . . He 'as only one eye, yes. But he see more wit' dat eye than another man wit' two. Cross him, my fran', and he weel 'ave the skin off your bones to mak' heem a pair of breeches . . ." The man broke off with a bellow of surprise: "But *sapristi!* You do not listen, boy . . ."

Wade rallied, made a deprecating gesture, could only shake his head foolishly. "Hah!" the other exclaimed. "I onnerstan'. Maybe more bettair we all go sleep now. I t'ink, my fran', you sleep lak' chile in rockabye bed, whose mother was sing to heem all de night long. The sand she is warm, soft lak' a pillow. Sleep, now . . ."

And those were the last words Wade Thayer heard as he fell back on the warming sand, beside the embers of the fire where Christian lay in the slumber of exhaustion. Sleep, blessed sleep, reached up to claim the boy's tired body.

The sun was an hour high when Wade awoke. Christian was shaking him by the shoulder. Urgently the Negro muttered: "They're takin' us to that Jean Lafitte, Young Mister. Wake up! The good Lawd knows what we-all is getting into now. If it ain't one thing, it sho' is another."

Wade sat upright and rubbed the remnants of sleep



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from his eyes. For the space of a second he could hardly decide where he was; then a glimpse of his companions of the preceding night, ladling up black coffee from a copper kettle, brought him back to reality. The boy felt stiff in every limb but ravenous.

"Here's your coffee, sir," Christian chuckled, with the air of belonging to a great plantation house. "An' I grabbed a ~~1~~oast goose leg for you, too. What's more, I've made a crutch to help you walk. No tellin' how far off this Jean Lafitte keeps his house."

Dominique You came swaggering toward them, an amiable grin wreathing his face. "Ah, my fran'," he boomed. "Already you look one honner-t'ousand times bettair. You sleep lak' dead man who is go to heāen. De coffee she is good, eh? Strong lak' *de diable!* Soon you see Capitaine Jean an' he fix dat leg of yours an' you tell him you' story."

Wade gulped the coffee, then stood up and tried to adjust the rude crutch that Christian had fashioned out of driftwood. His leg was less painful than it had been the night before, but it was stiff and badly swollen.

"Captain Lafitte is friendly to Americans?" the boy asked uncertainly.

"But yes," came the reassuring answer. "Though the *bon Dieu* knows why, with a price on Jean's head and his good brother in the *calabozo*! Foolish men are in New Orleans, I tell you true. The Gov'ment she is run by sheep—one jump jus' lak' another. Come, let us go!"

As the little party filed down the beach, the rising sun already was dispelling the mists from the Gulf. Seen by the light of sober day, the shores of Grande Terre looked



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bleak and uninviting. Where the yellow Mississippi strove to build and the sea forever sought to destroy, the little island struggled for precarious existence. Its trees leaned away from the wind's pressure like fleeing women with wind-blown hair. The scrub was a thicket of palmetto and dagger plant, with here and there a twisted live oak whose limbs were draped in funereal Spanish moss. But there was a heady sparkle in the air, and on such a morning as this it was impossible for Wade long to be down-hearted. Here was adventure! However unpredictable the immediate future might be, he and Christian had been admitted to a strange and colorful brotherhood, friendly to Americans. What fate could be worse than the hold of the *Cerberus*, with the certainty of Dartmoor in the end?

Dominique You kept up a running fire of talk, largely extolling the virtues of Jean Lafitte, and the boy hoped fervently that he would receive as ungrudging a welcome from the master of Barataria as he was being led to believe.

A half hour of walking brought them to the western tip of the island where, standing squarely on an eminence, a formidable stockade of cypress logs had been constructed. Through apertures in its walls the muzzles of a dozen eighteen-pounders could be brought to bear on any ship attempting to run the channel between Grande Terre and its neighboring islet, Grand Isle. Outside the stockade, a hundred or more thatched dwellings were clustered under the palmettoes, but before its gates there was a sight which caused Wade's breath to catch in his throat: a gibbet had been erected and there the body of a dead man dangled from the end of a rope, swaying in the wind. Over head, buzzards circled warily. A gruesome sight in all truth, and the boy drew up uncertainly, filled with sudden dread.



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But Dominique shrugged. "It ees not'ing," he said cheerfully. "Come along!"

"Nothing?" the boy stammered. "When a man's been hanged— Why?"

"Listen, my fran'," the other said quietly, "what you see there is justice. That man who has been hang', he was ver' bad. He disobeyed Capitaine Jean. He ordered his men to fire on 'Merican ship. For thees—he dic!"

"Then it's true?" the boy cried. "Jean Lafitte doesn't war on American shipping?"

"Ask him that you'self," came the answer, "an' he will tell you truc."

Within the stockade the boy saw a warehouse of impressive dimensions and a commodious building nearby that might be the barracoon. On the bay side, hidden by trees from view of the Gulf, a fleet of schooners and red-sailed feluccas rode at easy anchor; but it was the long, low dwelling at the back of the stockade, palm-thatched and shaded by a capacious veranda, that caught and fixed the boy's attention. On the veranda three men were seated at breakfast. One of the men Wade recognized instantly as the man who once had been pointed out to him on the Bayou Sauvage in New Orleans: Jean Lafitte. The boy's breath quickened. No mistaking that face so tanned and strongly featured!

"*Hola, Capitaine Jean!*" Dominique You was shouting. "I bring you guests. 'Mericans, too."

But suddenly the boy drew up short, an exclamation of astonishment bursting from him. For emerging from the doorway of the house a fourth figure appeared—a man gaunt and emaciated. "*Beaufort!*" Wade gasped. Was he seeing a ghost?



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“*Sapristi!*” that individual shouted hoarsely. “So you are still alive, boy? Myself, I wash right up on Capitaine Jean’s doorstep!” Excitedly the Frenchman turned to Jean Lafitte. “Here is the boy I speak about las’ night. I did not t’ink to see him alive again. They are tough, *bien* tough, these Americans, *hein?*”

Jean Lafitte stood to greet his guest—a lean, bladelike figure of a man with a good hard eye. A blue broadcloth jacket rested easily on his wide shoulders; his throat rose brown and strongly corded above the open-necked shirt of heavy silk; white buckskin breeches were molded to a muscular thigh. There was an air of casual elegance about this man who said: “Come up out of the sun, my friend.” A suggestion of accent colored Lafitte’s speech. “Beaufort already had told me something of your story. But first—coffee perhaps?” He waved a hand invitingly toward the table with fine linen and silver and laden with a sumptuous breakfast.

But the boy shook his head. “Christian and I have already eaten with your men, sir.”

“Ah, trust Dominique to do me proud!” A smile of great charm lighted Lafitte’s somewhat somber face. “Allow me to congratulate you on your escape from the British, young man. Like Beaufort, you must be blessed with a charmed life! Your own name I already know. Permit me to introduce my friends . . .” With a gesture and a murmured word Lafitte introduced his two companions at table as Octave Laporte and the Baron de Grandpré. The former was a small, dark, smiling man who nodded amiably enough. But the latter, waxen-faced and elegant of dress, eyed Wade with unconcealed animosity.



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It was the master of Barataria himself, however, who captured and held the boy's attention: a figure compellingly picturesque. Lafitte's black hair was worn thick over the ears and longish at the back, after the fashion current in New Orleans. A Parisian, some men said; yet in his high checkbones, in the fineness of his hands and feet, one might have suspected a Gascon with the blood of Spanish Moors in his veins. There was unconscious arrogance in the poise of Jean Lafitte's head, while in the restless black eyes there shone a spirit untamed and vital. As he stood there with such an easy hawklike grace, it was not difficult to understand why men called him "Black Falcon."

"You have been wounded," the man was saying, in the casual tone of one accustomed to dealing with such matters.

"Yes, sir," the boy answered. "A splinter—when my father's ship was attacked."

"Laporte, here, is skilled in medicine—though he is only my bookkeeper," Lafitte stated, and a cryptic smile quirked his lips as he added, "we are not strangers to wounds in Barataria! Laporte will have you ship-shape in no time, I promise. But be seated . . ."

Wade dropped into a chair offered by a Negro servant addressed as Cesar, while Dominique You appropriated another at the boy's left hand. Dominique poured himself a full goblet of wine, quaffed deep and finished off with a swipe of tattooed arm across the mustachios.

"Ah—!" he sighed explosively. "In this cursed climate a man must keep 'is liver afloat."

"There is no immediate danger of yours sinking, my friend," Lafitte smiled, then addressing himself to Wade,



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said, "you feel refreshed enough to tell me your story?"

Willingly the boy launched into the sequence of mis-adventures which, since sailing from New Orleans aboard the *Delta*, had cast him up on the shores of Grande Terre. As he talked, he was aware that Jean Lafitte was listening with complete absorption, missing no detail. The Baron de Grandpré, however, affected a show of indifference, from time to time taking snuff fastidiously from a jeweled box. And the boy was aware of an immediate antipathy, sharp and instinctive, for this French nobleman, dressed as a dandy in biscuit-colored velvet laced with gold. De Grandpré's side whiskers had been curled and pomaded, his black silk cravat elaborately knotted above an expanse of white frills. Yet there was nothing soft or decadent about him, as his attire might suggest to a homespun American. Wade sensed, rather, a power somehow sinewy and dangerous, as basically virile of fiber as Jean Lafitte himself.

De Grandpré made it apparent on his own account that he had taken a dislike to the boy. Coldly he demanded: "How do we know this cockerel speaks the truth, Lafitte? Prisoner of the English, he claims. He could as easily be a spy sent here by Claiborne! Do not be so readily deceived, *mon ami*."

Jean Lafitte lighted a black *cigano*, blew a spiral of smoke toward the ceiling before replying. "I have not become master of Barataria by making mistakes in judgment, de Grandpré," he answered dryly. "Even if Beaufort were not here to substantiate the boy's story, I should still believe it. He has a look of truth about him, and truth is rare enough not to be mistaken when one encounters it."



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The other shrugged cynically. Then, speaking French, he demanded of the boy: "You are a Creole?"

Wade shook his head. "You must excuse me, sir, but I do not speak your language."

"*Tah!*" de Grandpré scoffed, shifting superciliously into the boy's own tongue. "English is the language of savages."

Warmly Wade retorted: "There are many who speak it."

"There are many who speak Choctaw," the other snapped. "But French is the language of kings. And you have not answered my question: you are a Creole?"

"No, sir. My mother was of South Carolina. My father a Virginian."

"Ah!" the Frenchman murmured, significantly. "And Governor Claiborne is also a Virginian, is he not?"

"Yes! But he is much admired by the Creoles in New Orleans," the boy defended. A heat of anger rose in him as he faced the attack, so maliciously conceived: this attempt to discredit his story and force him to seem other than he was . . . Lafitte, Beaufort, Laporte were silently watching, offering no assistance in defense; but Dominique You scowled blackly at the French nobleman.

Baron de Grandpré burst suddenly into a jarring laugh. "The Creoles have allowed themselves to be sold like cattle, for sixty million francs—and to a nation of *parvenues*," he sneered. "*Mon Dieu!* but under Claiborne and the American Congress everybody in Louisiana is to be a 'citizen'—perhaps even the Negroes and the mules. That is the kind of liberty your Virginian offers, that all may eat out of the same trough. Let the Americans remember that in New Orleans they are unbidden guests!"



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Hot words came to Wade's lips. He half rose from his chair to face this sneering Frenchman; but Jean Lafitte moved smoothly into the breach. "You might remember, Baron de Grandpré, that this young man—Creole or no—is my guest, even as you yourself," he said quietly. "Perhaps Americans are, as you say, *sauvages*. But do you imagine that you are setting an example in civilized manners?"

The other was stung to retort: "Americans are fools! The British flag will fly above the Cabildo before another moon has passed. All Louisiana will belong to the English crown!"

Quickly Lafitte demanded: "Is that what you desire, baron?"

But de Grandpré evaded direct reply. "Who am I to alter the course of nations?" he parried, and snapped open the lid of the jeweled snuffbox, took snuff and flicked a grain from the frills at his throat. With studied indifference he came to his feet, bowed stiffly. "You will pardon me, *messieurs*, if I take my siesta. This foul climate was never intended for Frenchmen."

"*Hola!*" exploded Dominique You. "Maybe the Engleesh will enjoy it bettair when they tak' over Louisiane. But I t'ink dat not be ver' soon!"

De Grandpré ignored this remark as beneath his consideration; and in silence the others watched him as he took his way, with touchy dignity, across the compound, where he disappeared into a dwelling that had been set aside for his use.

A scowl fastened itself on Dominique You's face. "Him I do not like," he growled. "I tell you true, Capitaine Jean, one day we 'ave moch trouble with dat *noblesse*. Too



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moch he talk against 'Mericans, yet he nevair say jus' where he stand, jus' what he want."

Jean Lafitte's eyes remained inscrutable as he puffed the black *cigano*. "De Grandpré has had much to make him bitter," he reminded the other. "The revolutionists took all he possessed, and he near lost his head on the guillotine. Too, he was an avowed hater of Napoleon and had to flee France for his life. It is not pleasant to be uprooted from one's own country and forced to make a new life for oneself among strangers. This I know!"

"Still, I do not trust heem," rumbled Dominique.

To which Octave Laporte added. "Nor do I, Capitaine Jean. The baron will bear watching."

But Jean Lafitte's expression remained unfathomable as he turned his attention toward Wade Thayer. "For the present," he said, in the manner of one settling a point after due consideration, "you and Christian will remain at Grande Terre. Later, perhaps, you will be allowed to return to your home. I trust you will not find life here too insupportable."

The words were, the boy understood, less an invitation than a command. "You mean," Wade answered quietly, "I am your prisoner?"

"Let us not use that word," came the bland reply. "But you must realize that I am taking you on faith. I have many enemies in New Orleans, men who would destroy me if they could." With a casual gesture Lafitte indicated a placard that had been nailed to the wall at his back. "You may read for yourself," he murmured.

Wade had seen that placard before, but somehow now



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the proclamation took on new meaning. This is what he read:

I DO SOLEMNLY CAUTION ALL AND SINGULAR AGAINST GIVING ANY KIND OF SUCCOR TO *Jean Lafitte* AND HIS ASSOCIATES; BUT TO AIDING AND ABETTING IN ARRESTING HIM AND THEM, AND ALL OTHERS IN LIKE MANNER OFFENDING. AND DO FURTHERMORE, IN THE NAME OF THE STATE, OFFER A REWARD OF \$500 WHICH WILL BE PAID OUT OF THE TREASURY TO ANY PERSON DELIVERING SAID *Jean Lafitte* TO THE SHERIFF OF THE PARISH OF ORLEANS, OR TO ANY OTHER SHERIFF IN THE STATE, SO THAT *Jean Lafitte* MAY BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

(signed) *Gov. W. C. C. Claiborne*

“You see,” and *Jean Lafitte*’s eyes danced bright, “the good governor is most anxious to improve our acquaintance. My poor brother already lies in jail, on a trumped-up charge, and there are many it would please to see me there likewise. These are troublous times. For all I know, Wade Thayer, *you* might be needing that five hundred dollars Claiborne is so anxious to part with!” But the quick warmth of the man’s smile robbed his words of their edge, and he concluded: “For the time being, content



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yourself in being my guest. My *cuisine* you will find as excellent as any in New Orleans. My library is stocked with books whose titles may not be unfamiliar to you. Until Baron de Grandpré has satisfied himself that you are neither a spy of Claiborne nor a dupe of the British it will be wiser perhaps for you to stay here in the main house. Cesar will find quarters close by for Christian. Come!" Lafitte rose, the gracious host concerned only with his guest's comfort. "Permit me to show you my establishment. . ." Invitingly he gestured toward a wide doorway which opened into a shadowy room of impressive dimensions.

"Enter, my friend." An ironic chuckle escaped him. "The pirate stronghold, but do not be afraid! Men say that Jean Lafitte has the heart of an eagle, the brain of a scoundrel, the soul of a devil. Actually, he is mild as a lamb!"

At this, Dominique You gave a shout of mirth, and slapped one thigh a mighty blow. "Lamb, eh?" he chortled. "Black sheep weel be closer to the mark!"

Again a chuckle escaped Lafitte, and it was apparent to Wade that a warm friendship existed between these two men, outwardly so dissimilar.

Following his host, the boy stared in wide-eyed wonder at the strangest room he had ever beheld. Built like the aftercabin of some magnificent ship, it was floored and paneled in Santo Domingan mahogany, oiled to a luster of dark satin. Its walls were lined with finely tooled books and splendid *objets d'art* and hung with massively framed paintings. It could be lighted by candles in girandoles with cut-crystal drops that tinkled musically in the



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wind from the Gulf. Rich stuffs woven of metallic threads hung at the windows. It was opulent and luxurious beyond any home Wade knew. One paneled wall was lined with weapons from all parts of the world: scimitars and lances from North Africa, jeweled broadswords and wicked-looking daggers, Spanish matchlocks and Kentucky squirrel rifles. Among these treasures Jean Lafitte moved as one completely at home and enjoying himself.

Lifting a rug from a carved wooden chest, the man allowed the fringe to slip through his fingers with the loving touch of a connoisseur. "A silk prayer rug, a Kermanshah of the sixteenth century," he explained. "Something of an adventure connected with it, too. I found it in a mosque in Bokhara and nearly had my throat cut making away with it!"

"You mean," the boy faltered, "you just *stole* it?"

"Scarcely that," the other returned lightly. "I left five thousand dollars in specie in its place—twice its actual value. But its colors pleased me." The man lifted a small dagger from a glass case and held the weapon toward his guest. Light glittered on the gem-incrusted hilt. "This misericord I took from the Assyrian who would have stabbed me with it," he murmured. "See how cleverly the blade is perforated for poison. Weapons like this were used in the Crusades to give the *coup de grace* to a fallen knight."

From treasure to treasure Jean Lafitte moved, explaining, embellishing with anecdote, while Wade hung upon his every word, wondering from what grandee's galleon that jeweled chalice had been snatched, or what nobleman had met his death defending that superb Toledo sword.



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Suddenly the man turned, his face open, friendly. "Consider my home your own," he said. "For one of your years you have suffered much. Now I shall show you to your room and send Laporte to care for your wound." With a disarming smile he held out his hand and Wade gripped it. "It pleases me that you are here Wade Thayer! Think of Jean Lafitte not as an outlaw, not as a pirate, but as your friend. You have but to ask for what you desire. In the meantime . . ."

"In the meantime," the boy smiled, his heart warming toward this strange man, "I am your prisoner, Captain Jean!"

A slow smile answered his own. "On the contrary, you are a welcome guest who may leave whenever . . ."

"Whenever he wishes, sir?"

"Whenever *I* wish!" came the quick retort. "Rest now. We shall meet at dinner. . . ."

Three days slipped by in a blur of pleasant novelty. Octave Laporte, the bookkeeper, proved to be skilled as a surgeon, and under his care the wound in Wade's leg mended rapidly. Affairs at Grande Terre seemed for the moment to be at a standstill and Lafitte's outlaws, more than a thousand strong, occupied themselves with diversions—games, fishing, boatbuilding, the mending of nets and gear, with songs and dances. A spirit of camaraderie seemed to exist between these lawless men and their leader who was so different in every respect. Lafitte commanded and received obedience, even affection. Under his leadership Barataria was prospering as never before. A constant stream of merchants came to Grande Terre to bargain for the contraband with which the warehouses were filled,



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while the outlaws made deliveries of merchandise at Donaldsville and along the Bayou Lafourche, laughing in their sleeve as they gave the slip to Governor Claiborne's patrolling gunboats. The coffers of Jean Lafitte bulged and clinked with gold.

What circumstance, the boy wondered, could have persuaded such a man, gifted, brilliant, already wealthy, to place himself irrevocably outside the law? Was it only the lure of adventure, the spur of danger, which worked on men, such as Jean Lafitte, as strong wine works on others? True, for more than three hundred years privateering had been a legitimate enterprise. A man so minded could buy himself a ship, sign on a hardy crew and declare allegiance to some warring nation for the purpose of preying on enemy shipping. The adopted nation would supply him with letters of marque which gave him license to capture and plunder all enemy sail. If this were the extent of Lafitte's activities, the man was no more an outlaw than any other privateer. But how little, actually, was known about him—even by those who were thought to be his friends! The Lafitte brothers had appeared mysteriously out of nowhere: Jean, suave and impenetrable; Pierre, the older, close-mouthed and discreet. In New Orleans, setting up a blacksmith shop in Saint Phillip Street, they had begun their career as middle-men for the corsairs of the Gulf. They ended by taking over the trade. There were few merchants in the city who were not their customers.

But success brought with it many enemies. Ugly rumors found ready circulation. . . . The Lafitte brothers, it began to be whispered, had turned pirate, traitors to the country of their adoption. While proof of this was not forthcom-



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ing, the very men who patronized the warehouses of Grande Terre returned to the city with stories that calumniated both Lafittes, to the end that Governor Clairborne had been forced to declare Jean an outlaw and had succeeded in jailing Pierre on the ugly charge of piracy.

Witnessing the manner of life these corsairs lived, however, Wade Thayer no longer wondered why so many embraced the calling of buccaneer. For instead of four-water grog, salt junk and pork soup, the freebooters of Barataria dined on all the luxuries: terrapin and goose and wild swan and pompano, topped off with wines of rare vintage, West India preserves and Havana *ciganos*. Dominique You, appointing himself the boy's mentor, explained that each man received a share in the distribution of prize money, the monthly quota often exceeding five hundred dollars apiece, while the "officers" received many times that sum.

In this amazing company, on an island fortress set in a labyrinth of waterways, Wade had the unreal feeling of hanging in suspension, waiting breathlessly for some event of tremendous importance to take place.

He could not know how short a time he had to wait!

